

# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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No. 1

## The Centennial Anniversary of John S. Coffman

October 15-17, 1948

HARRY A. BRUNK

For several years Byard Shank, of Mt. Crawford, Virginia, has been collecting material on the life of J. S. Coffman. When he called at the home of the writer on business last summer and incidentally stated that 1948 marks the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of John S. Coffman, I said immediately that we must have a centennial observance of some kind. We decided to contact Stanley Shenk, instructor of Mennonite Church history at the Eastern Mennonite College, about it. He was enthusiastic about having such a meeting. Our next step was to contact the church leaders of the Middle and Northern Districts of the Virginia Conference, and as a result a committee, composed of H. A. Brunk, Nellie Coffman, a niece of the late John S. Coffman, Byard Shank, Stanley Shenk, and J. Early Suter, was appointed to work out a program for the occasion. About the same time we contacted other members of the Coffman family about such a meeting. Members of the Goshen College faculty were asked to approve the plans and to aid in the work. The committee naturally felt that such a centennial observance should be held in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia since Coffman was a native of Virginia and had spent more than half his life in the state.

A program was arranged for October 15-17, the sixteenth, a Saturday, being the birthday of the late John S. Coffman. At the opening session of the centennial, Byard Shank read a paper entitled, "A Short Sketch of His Life." The purpose of this sketch was to give the audience a general introduction to the life of John S. Coffman and the centennial observance. Barbara Coffman, a daughter of S. F. Coffman, of Vineland, Ontario, and a granddaughter of John S. Coffman, read home-life incidents from the John S. Coffman diaries. The last feature of the Friday evening program was a paper read by S. F. Coffman on the subject, "Father as I Knew Him."

On Saturday evening, H. S. Bender, Dean of the Seminary at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, spoke on the subject, "An Hour That Needed a Man." This discussion was followed by one by Stanley Shenk, of the Eastern Mennonite College faculty, entitled, "The Man That Responded to the Need." A special feature of the Saturday evening program was an

open forum on "John S. Coffman as I Knew Him." In this forum S. E. Allgyer, of West Liberty, Ohio, at the age of eighty-nine, a man of J. S. Coffman's own generation, spoke feelingly of his association with the late J. S. Coffman. J. D. Hartman, of Harrisonburg, Virginia, told the story of the first series of revival meetings held at Weaver's Church by J. S. Coffman in the late fall of 1888. C. D. Wenger, of Harrisonburg, spoke briefly.

In the Sunday morning service, Paul Erb, of Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, the editor of the *Gospel Herald*, spoke on "John S. Coffman as a Writer." He was followed by H. S. Bender on the subject, "J. S. Coffman as a Personal Worker." A most significant part of the morning service was a sermon by S. F. Coffman on Galatians 2:20, a text that he had heard his father use a number of times.

In the Sunday afternoon session, H. S. spoke twice. His Sunday evening talk was placed here so that he could return to Goshen College in time for his Monday morning classes. The first topic of the afternoon session was "John S. Coffman as an Educator," by H. S. Bender. This was followed by "John S. Coffman as a Man of Prayer," by H. A. Brunk. The last talk of the afternoon was given by H. S. Bender on "His Challenge for the Future."

In the last session of the Centennial, on Sunday evening, Paul Erb spoke challengingly on the subject, "J. S. Coffman as an Evangelist." This was indeed a fitting subject for the closing session, for evangelism was the major emphasis of Coffman's life. The closing feature of the meeting was a presentation from the S. F. Coffman diaries, by S. F. Coffman, of "Closing Scenes" in the life of his father.

The writer, assisted by Richard Detweiler, the sponsor of the Mennonite Historical Fellowship of the Eastern Mennonite College, acted as moderator. J. Mark Stauffer served in the capacity of song leader. The theme song of the centennial was written by John S. Coffman—"O Weary Wanderer." John S. Coffman's own tune for his hymn, found in the Mennonite Hymnbook published in 1890, was used a number of times. This added a touch to the program that was much appreciated.

All the sessions of the centennial except one were held in the auditorium of the Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia. It was felt that more people from the community and the college could attend if the sessions were held here. One session—the Sunday morning session—was held at the Bank Church

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## General Catalogue of the Archives of the Mennonite Church

NELSON P. SPRINGER

The life of a church is the life of its people, more particularly of its leaders and those who hold official positions in its organizations, but also of each individual member. As the generations play their part and pass from the scene, leaving their work to younger generations, the records they leave behind them hold the story of the life of the church in their days. We call these records the Archives of the church.

Since General Conference took action in 1937 authorizing the Historical Committee to establish an official Church Archives, valuable materials have been collected in the depository in leased rooms in the basement of the Goshen College Memorial Library, Goshen, Indiana. Slowly the treasure is growing. It is a varied collection. There are official records of general and local organizations. There are diaries and personal records, reflecting the life of the times, or serving as primary sources for biographical studies of individuals. There are photographs. There are sermon outlines and manuscripts. The catalog which follows indicates the variety of materials which are included in our collection. A true conception of the nature of these materials, however, could only be given by a complete catalog of each individual item. And only the person who has handled these materials can truly feel the life which still flows through them—the visions and hopes, the joys and disappointments, the struggles, victories, and tragedies, and the personalities which have made the Mennonite Church what it has been and what it is today.

Along with this catalogue I would like to speak a word for the work of the Historical Committee. The co-operation of each individual member in the Mennonite Church is needed in their work. The materials which compose the Archives of the Mennonite Church have been placed there by individuals and families as well as by organizations. Yet, at times, a false sense of humility and, at other times, a lack of appreciation for materials of historical significance have worked against the efforts of the committee. House cleaning may be friend or foe of their work. If house cleaning reminds you that you have in your possession papers that you seldom touch from one house cleaning period to another which really are of the nature of the things in the catalog which

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CENTENNIAL . . . John S. Coffman  
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near Dayton, Virginia. This meeting made the centennial a bit more realistic historically, for it was here that John S. Coffman was called to the ministry on July 18, 1875. It was also near the Bank Church, in a stream called Muddy Creek, that John S. Coffman at the age of sixteen sealed his vow with the Lord in water baptism.

Another interesting feature of the centennial was a visit to some of the Coffman homesteads in the valley. This tour was made under the able leadership and direction of S. F. Coffman. We went first to the birthplace of John S. Coffman, twelve miles south of Harrisonburg, near Burkettown, Virginia. The house on this farm, now more than a hundred years old, is still in a good state of preservation. We are not absolutely sure that John S. Coffman was born in this house, however. It is possible that he was born in a tenant house which stood near by and which is no longer standing. Another place of interest was the Weaver homestead, near Dale Enterprise, Virginia, now the home of Leonard Jones, where Bishop Samuel Coffman, the father of J. S. Coffman, lived at the time of the Civil War. It was here that J. S. Coffman brought joy and comfort when he returned from the North at the close of the war.

We also visited several places where John S. Coffman lived after his marriage to Elizabeth Heatwole in 1869. One was the S. M. Burkholder place, near Dale Enterprise, where S. F. Coffman was born. The house in which he was born is no longer standing. Its site, however, is easily located by a well which was placed near by. Another place was the approximate location of the buildings in which John S. Coffman lived at the time of his call to Elkhart, Indiana, in 1879. This place, located several miles northwest of Dayton, Virginia, is known in the Coffman family as "gravel hill," the name indicating that the land was not very productive.

Still another feature of the centennial celebration was the Coffman exhibit. This consisted in part of letters, diaries, and a Sunday-school lesson help manuscript, material loaned to the college from the Mennonite Archives at Goshen College through the kindness of H. S. Bender. In addition to the above, there was the large family Bible of the late Bishop Samuel Coffman and other materials contributed by Nellie Coffman, Mrs. Earl Grove, and Annie Heatwole, all members of the Coffman family.

The speeches of the centennial anniversary were recorded and will be published together in either the April or the July issue of *Christian Ministry*. It is the plan to hold the type from this number and use it to print separate reports of the centennial which may be purchased by interested parties.

Harrisonburg, Virginia.

## A List of Scriptures Used in Amish Services

DANIEL B. SWARTZENDRUBER

The list of Scriptures given below is a translation from a German copy left by my father, Bishop Jacob F. Swartzendruber, of the Lower Deer Creek Amish Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa, and presents the Bible readings as they are followed by the Amish churches. It is interesting to note that only New Testament Scriptures are used and that two entire chapters are read in each service. The chapters, therefore, are given in pairs in this list. The year starts with the Christmas season. The first chapter is read with the congregation standing and the second is read during his discourse by the minister who has the major part in the service. The second chapter is referred to as "Die Nachgehende Schrift"—the Scripture that follows.

"Paul said, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works' (II Tim. 3:16, 17). Therefore the following shall not be regarded as a rule from which one may not deviate but one may read between times other Scriptures as circumstances demand. The Christmas Scriptures are Luke 1 and 2. At the next service Matt. 2 and 3 are used, followed by Matt. 4 and 5; 6 and 7; 8 and 9, as time and circumstances call for. When communion services are not held on Easter, then one reads Matt. 26 and 27.

"In preparatory services Matt. 18 and I Cor. 5 are read. In connection with communion service, one reads Luke 22:1-32, I Cor. 10:1-24, I Cor. 11 verse 1 and then verse 17 to the end of the chapter, John 6:48 to the end of chapter, and John 13:1 to verse 17.

"In connection with baptismal services, or otherwise, and each time before the preparatory service it is fitting to speak of the new birth, and John 3 and Rom. 6 are read. Each time after the communion service, it is customary to speak of the glorious liberty the children of God enjoy in Christ Jesus, and in this service John 8 and Gal. 5 or Rom. 8 are used. Or one may speak of the steadfastness in faith and read Hebrews 12 and 13.

"The Pentecost Scriptures are Acts 1 and 2; 3 and 4; 5 and 6.

"The seedtime Scriptures are Matt. 12 and John 15. The harvesttime Scriptures are John 4 and Rev. 14. The ingathering Scriptures are Luke 12 and 13; 14 and 16; 17 and 18; 19 and Rom. 12 or Eph. 4.

"The following are known as the between-Scriptures and can be used anywhere between the others wherever it is convenient to do so: John 14 and Eph. 4 or 6; John 14 and I Thess. 5; John 16 and 17; or John 17 and I Cor. 13; I John 1 and 2; I John 3 and 4; I Peter 1 and 2; I Peter 3 and 4; Mark 7 and Eph. 6. Toward the end of the year one preaches

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## An Old Church Letter

MELVIN GINGERICH

The first man to be ordained bishop of the Amish Church in the Johnson-Washington counties, Iowa, settlement was Jacob Schwarzenruber, who came to America in 1833. The ordination to that office occurred in Iowa in 1853, approximately two years after he had moved to that state from Maryland. The following ministers in the Mennonite church are direct descendants of Bishop Schwarzenruber: S. C. Yoder, Simon Gingerich, A. Lloyd Swartzendruber, Amos Gingerich, George Reber, Joseph Reber, Fred Gingerich, J. C. Gingerich, Fred J. Gingerich, Leroy Gingerich, Elmer G. Swartzendruber, and Alva Swartzendruber. The Gingerichs in the above list are also all descendants of the John Gingerich who signed his name to the church letter. Bishop Schwarzenruber's life and work are given in some detail in the July, 1946, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. The original copy of the church letter is in the possession of Daniel B. Swartzendruber, a great-grandson, who furnished the copy and the free translation below.

Gnade Friede und Barmhertzig Keit  
Wünschen wir allen Dienern und Eldes-  
ten der Gemeinde Gottes Beynebst Einen  
brüdrlichen Grusz an alle die genigen Mit  
brüder den dieses schrieben Möchte zu  
hand Komen thun wir dieses su wiesch  
daz dieser Jacob schwartzenthuber und  
seine Ehe Frau Barbara und seine beide  
Stif Söne, nemlich Jacob Güngerich, und  
Daniel Güngerich alle 4 bey unser ge-  
meinte als liebe brüther und schwester  
sind. aber sonderlich ist dieses noch an zu  
merken dasz dem Vatter der dienst zum  
buch auf Erlegt ist und dieses schrieben  
als Ein zeugniss Ihm gegeben ist Nem-  
lich dasz ihm weiters niechts kan zu last  
gelegt werten & und Eis solches ist Von  
Miehr als Eldeste diener Daniel Schlabach  
gegeben Nieder bisheim d 10 april 1833.  
Diener zum buch Johannes Güngerich Nit  
bis.

Grace, Peace, and Mercy we wish to  
all ministers and elders of the church of  
God together with a brotherly greeting  
to all fellow brethren in whose hands  
this writing may come. We herewith  
certify that this Jacob Schwarzenruber  
and his wife Barbara and his two step-  
sons, namely, Jacob Guengerich and Dan-  
iel Guengerich, all four are members of  
our church as dear brethren and sister.  
But especially is this to be mentioned that  
to the father is entrusted the ministry of  
the Word and this writing is given him  
as a testimony, so that nothing can be  
laid in his way and this is given by me  
as elder,

Daniel Schlabach, Nieder Bisheim,  
April 10, 1833

Minister John Gingerich, Nit bis.



GENERAL CATALOGUE

(Continued from first page)

follows, why don't you send them to the Mennonite Archives, c/o Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana? Please don't do that other thing which has happened so frequently—shovel these things into the furnace. Many an irreplaceable document has thus gone up in smoke. It might be a safe rule to say that if you are in doubt as to the historical value of any papers you might have, you should let the archivist decide. And even if you aren't tempted to destroy them, there are many arguments in favor of depositing them in the Archives. The Mennonite Church Archives are located in a fireproof building, where they are guarded against the danger of fire and the deteriorating qualities of light, heat, and dirt. There they are preserved from the eyes of the merely curious and kept available for the study of those who will treat them with respect and appreciation. Part of the collection is owned by the Historical Committee. Other parts are deposited there by organizations such as the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities and the Mennonite Central Committee. The following catalog is a general index of materials now on deposit.

American Friends Peace Material  
Amish-Mennonite Schism in Switzerland, 1693  
—Letters and Narrative  
Bally, Yost, Release from Bavarian Army, 1825  
Bender, D. H., Collection (7 boxes plus charts)  
Bible Conference Charts  
Bible Conference Records  
Class Lecture Notes  
Diaries, 1899-1943  
Essays  
Marriage Records  
Sermon Outlines  
Sermon Records  
Beutler, Jacob—2 letters, ca. 1876  
Bowman, Samuel S.  
Record of places visited and visitors in his home, 1903-1922  
Sunday School and Church Collections, Kitchener, Ontario, 1906-1920  
Weather Records, 1903-1923  
Other Memoranda  
Brubaker, Jacob, Copy Book  
Brunk, John D.  
Correspondence Lessons, 1893  
Music Manuscripts  
Other Records  
Burkholder, Oscar, and Melvin Gingerich  
Material on Mennonites in Iowa  
Church Hymnal, Correspondence and Materials in Preparation of—ca. 1915-1925  
Church of the Brethren Peace Materials  
Civilian Bond Record, Provident Trust Company, Sheets 1-155  
C.P.S. Printed Forms, etc.  
Clemens, George W., Copy and Account Book  
Clemmer, A. G., World War I Materials  
Coffman, J. S.  
Diaries  
File Concerning Evangelistic Work  
Commission for Christian Education and Young People's Work  
Metzler, A. J., Correspondence  
Minutes  
Minutes of Committees  
Reports  
Conference Reports, Constitutions, Disciplines, Calendars of Appointment, Programs, etc.  
General District  
Conservative A.M.  
Diener Versammlung  
Eastern A.M.  
Indiana A.M.  
Ontario A.M.  
Western District A.M.  
Eastern District General Conference Mennonites (1847-1902)  
African Mennonite Mission  
Alberta-Saskatchewan Mennonite  
Argentina Mennonite  
Dakota-Montana Mennonite  
Franconia Mennonite

Illinois Mennonite  
Independent Mennonite Congregations  
India Mennonite  
Indiana-Michigan Mennonite  
Iowa-Missouri Mennonite  
Iowa-Nebraska Mennonite  
Kansas-Nebraska Mennonite  
Lancaster Mennonite  
Missouri-Kansas Mennonite  
Nebraska-Minnesota Mennonite (German)  
North Central Mennonite  
Ohio Mennonite & Eastern A.M.  
Ohio Mennonite Christian Workers' Conference  
Ontario Mennonite  
Pacific Coast Mennonite  
South Central Mennonite  
Southwestern Pennsylvania Mennonite  
Virginia Mennonite  
Washington County, Md., and Franklin County, Pa., Mennonite  
Old Order (Wieser) Mennonites  
Old Order Amish Mennonites  
Conscientious Objectors in World War I  
Eastern Mennonite School Constitution and Act of Incorporation, 1903  
Elkhart Institute Collection  
Class Lists  
Library Records  
Literary Society Records  
Mailing Lists  
Programs  
Shareholders' Certificates  
Treasurer's Report  
Tuition Register  
Frey, E. L., World War I Correspondence  
Frey, J. C., World War I Correspondence  
Funk, John F., Collection (120 boxes)  
Arithmetic Workbooks  
Articles in Manuscript  
Articles in Manuscript, Incomplete  
Autobiographical Materials  
Autobiography, 1835-1930  
Austell Improvement Company Documents  
Bible Society Records (American and Elkhart)  
Biographies and Autobiographies of Others  
Book Lists  
Catalog of Personal Library (incomplete)  
Census of Mennonites, 1895-1900  
Church and Sunday School Hymnal, Record of Sales  
Church Memoranda  
Clippings  
Constitution of Bible Christian Society (Children's Organization)  
Correspondence, 1854-1924  
Diaries, 1852-1920  
Diary Excerpts  
Family History Correspondence and Memoranda, 1890-1894  
Family Histories  
Financial Records  
Fretz, Jacob, Estate  
Funk, Mrs. J. F., Personal Letters, 1857-1912  
Funk, Phoebe and Martha, Correspondence  
Funk and Kolb (A. B.), Leases and Deals  
Herald of Truth Materials in Manuscript (Articles, Poetry, Obituaries)  
Historical Manuscripts (evidently for a book on Mennonite History)  
Legal Papers  
Members of Goshen College Congregation, 1903-1914  
Memoranda, General  
Memoranda of Various Conferences  
Memoranda of John F. Funk Memorial Service  
Mennonite Publishing Company  
Bonds  
Bonds, Canceled  
Book Orders, 1925-28  
Financial Records  
Inventory  
Legal Papers  
Letter Books, 1879-1914  
Manuscripts about the Company  
Miscellaneous Printed Items  
Pay Roll  
Printing Plates  
Proxies for Annual Meetings  
Record of Shares of Stock  
Reports of Shares of Stock  
Subscription Lists  
Young People's Paper Materials  
Minutes of Young People's Paper Association  
Photographs and Name Cards  
School Teaching Records  
Sermon Outlines  
Sermons  
Sunday School Records  
Elkhart S.S. Library  
Elkhart S.S. Teachers  
Milwaukee Depot Mission (Chicago) S.S., 1862  
S.S. Superintendents, Mennonite  
S.S. Teachers in Alabama, Indiana, Nebraska, and Ohio  
Tracts and Clippings  
Translations of Peter Burkholder's "Eine Verhandlung von der Aeusserlichen Wasser-Taufe"

Gehman, Benedic, Deed of Land to John Stauffer, 1760  
General Problems Committee Questionnaires to Presidents and Deans of Church Schools, 1933  
General Sunday School Committee  
Metzler, A. J., Correspondence  
Minutes, 1915-  
Goshen College Materials  
Athletic Association Records  
Building Account Books  
Class of 1904 Minute Book  
Clippings  
Deutsche Verein Records  
Library Correspondence, H. S. Bender, Libr., 1924-1928  
Literary Society Records  
Adelphian  
Aletheian  
Aurora  
Avon  
Ciceronian  
C.M.A.  
Elkhart and Goshen Literary Society Membership Lists, 1896-1926  
Emersonian  
Homerian  
Philomathian  
Vesperian  
Menonian Chorus Club Records  
Mennonite Historical Society Minutes  
Oratorical Association Minutes  
Pamphlets  
Philharmonic Society Minutes  
Student Volunteer Band Records  
Tennis Association Records, 1906  
Treasurer's Reports  
Goshen College Congregation Minutes, 1904-1924  
Goshen College Congregation Young People's Meeting Minutes, 1912-1920  
Greider, Martin, letter to Christian Greider, October 18, 1840  
Guengerich, S. D., Collection (not filed)  
Address List  
Autograph Album  
Correspondence  
Deer Creek Mills Dairy Association Records  
Diaries  
Diaries of Daniel P. Guengerich  
Farm Records  
German School Association Treasurer's Book (Johnson County, Iowa, founded 1890)  
German School Class Records  
Manuscripts of "Forms of Prayer" and "Katechismus"  
Personal Financial Records  
Photographs  
Preparation of "Unpartheiische Liedersammlung," 1891  
Settlers' List, Johnson County, Iowa  
Sunday School Records  
Hartzler, J. E., to Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, urging location of Mission Board Home in Goshen, Indiana, 1914  
Hartzler, J. S.  
South America Matters, ca. 1908  
World War I Correspondence, 1918-1926  
Herold der Wahrheit Proofs, February 15, 1916  
Herring, Dr. William, Diary, 1873-74  
Hershey, T. K., Trip to South America, 1918  
Home and Foreign Relief Committee, 1897-1901  
Financial Records and Papers  
Orphans' Fund Book  
Secretary's Records (A. C. Kolb)  
Horsch, John, Collection (29 boxes) (not filed)  
Clippings (indexed)  
Correspondence  
History of Waldenses  
Manuscripts of Articles and Books  
Notebooks and Memoranda  
Jutzi, George, to Christian Miller, 1843  
Kauffman, Daniel, Collection  
Correspondence, 1920-42  
Hymn Lists for Church Hymnal  
Mennonite General Conference Transcripts, 1935  
"Mennonites in World War" Committee Papers  
Publishing Committee of Mennonite Publication Board Correspondence, 1908-1914  
Kolb, Tobias and Magdalena, Correspondence, 1840-1881  
Kratz, Jacob, Copy Book and Arithmetic Workbook  
Kratz, Valentine, Arithmetic Workbooks  
Krebiel Letters, 1833-1841  
Kropp, B., Day Book, Ontario, 1833- (including Baptism Records)  
Kurtz, Joseph, Correspondence, 1834-1838  
Lambert, George, Correspondence from India during Famine, 1897  
Lehman, D. A., Clippings and Memoranda  
Litwiller, Nelson, Class Notes  
Loucks, Aaron, and J. S. Hartzler  
Correspondence, 1918-1919  
Printed Materials  
Questionnaires to Conference  
McManus, S. B., Young People's Paper Materials  
Martin, Henry, Correspondence, 1819-1855



Masontown Mennonite Church Historical Data  
 Mast, C. Z., Correspondence, 1931  
 Mennonite Aid Plan  
 Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities  
 Materials (deposited, 1942)  
 Correspondence, 1908, 1909, 1911-1934  
 Official Reports, 1906-1939  
 Quarter Investment Fund, 1935-1938  
 Mennonite Central Committee Materials (deposited, 1941)  
 American Mennonite Relief Food Remittance  
 Audits, 1928, 1930  
 Bender, H. S., Germany Records, 1930  
 Bender, H. S., Bills and Correspondence for  
 Mennonite Immigrants to South America  
 Canceled Checks and Bank Books, 1920-28  
 Check Stubs, 1928-34  
 Constantinople Mennonite Home Records  
 Corporation Paraguay Records and Official  
 Papers  
 Correspondence, 1918-1935  
 Disaster Relief Committee, 1921  
 Disaster Relief Unit, Lutheran Questionnaires,  
 1920-21  
 Harbin Refugees, 1928  
 Kratz, Clayton, Materials  
 Miller, O. O., Materials  
 Clippings  
 Correspondence, 1922-1931  
 Diary of Trip into Mennonite Communities,  
 South Russia, 1920  
 "Feeding the Hungry" Manuscripts and  
 Proof Sheets  
 Russian Immigration Correspondence, 1921  
 Mennonite Relief Unit  
 Constantinople  
 Constantinople, Yenikeny Home  
 South Russia  
 Photographs  
 Mumaw, Levi H., Materials  
 Checks Written, 1921-1926  
 Clothing Shipments Records  
 Russian Relief Correspondence, 1921-1938  
 Photographs, Immigrant Groups  
 Photographs, Miscellaneous  
 Russian Relief Materials  
 Applications for Russian Relief Work  
 Correspondence, 1922-29  
 Financial Records, 1921-23  
 Financial Reports, 1920-28  
 Moscow-Constantinople Records and Reports  
 Miscellaneous  
 Unruh, B. H., Correspondence, 1930  
 Unruh, B. H., Reports, 1930-35  
 Mennonite Evangelizing Board, Minutes of  
 1892 Meeting  
 Mennonite Mutual Aid  
 Mennonite Peace Problems Committee  
 Miller, O. O., Correspondence, 1925-35  
 Miller, O. O., Manuscripts of Articles and  
 Addresses  
 Minutes (incomplete)  
 Peace Team Records, 1948  
 Reports  
 Mennonite Relief Commission Financial Records,  
 1922-1928  
 Armenian Relief, 1918-1925  
 Mennonite Relief Committee Records  
 Mennonite Relief Committee, John L. Horst  
 Correspondence, 1938-1939  
 Mensch, J. B., Conference Minutes (Franconia)  
 Migrations of Mennonites, Manuscripts on  
 Miller, O. O., Missionary Messenger Affairs,  
 1925-1926  
 Mininger, J. D., Correspondence, 1915-1940  
 (33 boxes)  
 Near East Relief, 1919-1922  
 Derstine, Wm. A., Correspondence  
 Derstine, Wm. A., Diary  
 Hertzler, Silas, Diary  
 Warye, John, Diary  
 Nonresistance, Pamphlets on  
 North. G. W., Record Books, ca. 1903-1923  
 Oratorio Association Records  
 Oyer, Noah, Collection  
 Articles in Manuscript  
 Class Lecture Notes  
 Correspondence, 1924-1930  
 Outlines  
 Registration in Bible School  
 Paden, Grace, Patent for 120 acres in Lancaster  
 County, 1738  
 Petition Against Military Service to Pennsylvania  
 Colonial Assembly, 1775  
 Plank, David, Correspondence, 1898-1911, and  
 other papers, including Colonial Pennsylvania  
 Deeds  
 Programs of Bible Conferences, Sunday School  
 Meetings, etc.  
 Risser, Johann, Correspondence, 1835-1865  
 Schwartzendruber, Jacob, Collection  
 Amish Church Letter  
 Amish Manual for Baptism, Communion,  
 Marriage, etc.  
 Amish Ministers' Letters on Various Problems  
 Amish Service Records  
 Conference Reports (European and American)

## A Communication

851 E. Orange St.,  
 Lancaster, Pa.  
 January 24, 1948.

My dear Mr. Gingerich:

Your item in the January issue of the Bulletin on the origin of the term "Old Mennonites" has prompted me to address this letter to you, giving another plausible reason for the use of the term "old" as applied to certain Mennonite members.

Early Court records in Lancaster refer to some of the Mennonite congregations then existing in Lancaster County, as the "Society of Menists," and no doubt the pioneer Mennonites in Pennsylvania were all of the same doctrinal opinion.

With the increases in population, differences of opinion began to develop among the Mennonites. For instance, Francis Herr, son of the Mennonite minister, John Herr, of the Strasburg (Pa.) congregation, about the year 1780, began to voice his opinion that he felt the church was departing from a straight and narrow path, according to his conception of the Gospel.

He almost persuaded his minister father to his own ideas and the situation became so serious that a meeting of bishops, ministers, and deacons was held at the Lampeter Meetinghouse (now Mellinger Church) in 1785 to discuss and settle the matter.

As a result of this meeting, Francis Herr left the Mennonite Church. Other members who had their own doubts and grievances, fancied or real, supported Francis and became followers of his, but during the life of Francis they had no church organization. After the death of Francis, Jan. 2, 1810, his son, John Herr, became the leader of the dissenters, and finally, on May 30, 1812, the *Reformed* Mennonite Church was officially organized,

near the then village of Strasburg, Pa.

While this group named themselves "Reformed" Mennonites, the popular term used to denote them was the "New" Mennonites, or as some derisively named them "New Lights." To distinguish the regular Mennonites from the "New," it became common usage to say "Old" Mennonites when referring to Mennonites generally.

My great-grandfather, Johannes Grieder (John Krieder), was minister at Mellinger Church for 35 years, having been ordained the same year that the Reformed Mennonites organized their church.

Most sincerely,

Amos K. Stauffer.

## The Mellinger Meetinghouse

M. G. Weaver in his *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference* presented interesting material concerning the Mellinger Meetinghouse, the building of which Amos K. Stauffer speaks in the communication above. There have been four meetinghouses on the present site, as well as an enlargement of one of the buildings. The present building, 70 by 110 feet, with basement has a seating capacity of over one thousand. Among the Lancaster Conference churches, it is second only to Weaverland in size, but has a larger membership than Weaverland, with 609 in 1948. Located three miles east of Lancaster on the Lincoln Highway, it attracts the interest of many tourists. Of interest in the light of Amos K. Stauffer's comment on the use of the term "Old Mennonite" are the three inscriptions below which are found on three different but adjacent stone blocks embedded in the wall above the front entrance of Mellinger's Meetinghouse.

Rebuilt 1914

Old Mennonite  
 Church

Built A. D. 1894

To God be all the Praise

Lampeter M. Meeting  
 House Built  
 A. D. 1767

—M. G.

## SCRIPTURES USED IN AMISH SERVICES

(Continued from page 2)

concerning the end of the world and reads Matt. 24 and 25.

"At the marriage service is read Matt. 19:1-11 and I Cor. 7; also Eph. 5:15 to the end of the chapter.

"When reinstating a fallen member read Luke 15 or part thereof or II Cor. 2:1-11."

Kalona, Iowa.

Shank, J. W., Papers  
 Shoemaker, J. S., diaries (file incomplete)  
 Shoemaker, J. S., and J. S. Hartzler, World  
 Missionary Conference Scrapbook, 1910  
 Smith, Margaret, Diary, 1881-1895  
 Steinman, Christian, Correspondence, 1820-1852  
 Steiner, M. S., Correspondence, 1890-1893  
 Sunday Schools  
 Clinton Union S.S., 1874-1891  
 Elkhart, 1884-1893 (other records in J. F. Funk Collection)  
 Milwaukee Depot Mission Sabbath School Records (J. F. Funk Collection)  
 Oak Grove (Champaign Co., Ohio) S.S., 1875-1885; 1901-1915  
 Oak Grove (?) Mennonite Sunday School, 1888-1894  
 Ohio Sunday School Historical Data (John Umble)  
 Ohio Sunday School Records (Walter Oswald)  
 Walnut Grove Sunday School Records and Reports, 1896-1913  
 West Liberty, Ohio—First Mennonite Sunday School in Ohio, 1863  
 White Brick Sunday School Reports, 1927-1928  
 Toronto Home Mission, Canada, Second Annual Report, 1907  
 Western Mennonite Welfare Committee, 1918-1919  
 Yoder, John K., Papers, 1857-  
 Yoder, S. C., Conscientious Objectors in Camp, 1917-1921  
 Yoder, S. C., General War Problems, 1917-1921  
 Young People's Institute, O. O. Miller, 1929-1931  
 Zimmerly, John, Family Records, ca. 1800-1860  
 Goshen, Indiana



# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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Vol. X

APRIL, 1949

No. 2

## The Dutch Mennonite Peace Group

F. VAN DER WISSEL

F. van der Wissel is one of the two pastors of the Dutch Mennonite congregation at Leeuwarden in Friesland. At present he is the chairman of the Vredesgroep (Peace Group) and an ardent spokesman for the position of Biblical nonresistance and peace.

It is not very simple for American Mennonites to obtain a correct idea of the thinking of the Dutch people in general and Mennonites in this country in particular, as well as realize the possibilities of peace work among us. We know that you belong to a community which—though not entirely, anyhow in majority—avows the ancient Mennonite principles, whereas these principles in our country are seriously watered down. Though we earnestly regret this, it is necessary to acknowledge this fact, in order to avoid possible misunderstandings.

### *The Past*

Menno Simons arrived at the principles of nonresistance after and in contradiction to the revolutionary agitations in Münster about 1535. The principal intention of his way of acting was to convince his fellow men of the sinfulness of brute force and fighting. Thus he founded his quiet communities of peaceful baptizers who by their behavior and character have commanded the greatest respect of contemporaries and later generations.

By different causes, too complicated to mention here, people in Holland have in majority gradually abandoned these views. One of the mightiest factors in this loss was certainly Calvinism, which, having risen in the time of the fight for freedom, glorified the rebellion as a religious war, and has always had the greatest influence in our republic. This large religious denomination certainly has influenced greatly the smaller denominations through mixed marriages and also through its example. And so we arrive at the fact that an author of the nineteenth century could say of the Mennonites of that time, they were "a watered progeny of glorious ancestors." When the government in 1893 wanted to introduce the general military service, thereby stopping the till-then-existing possibility of substitution, hardly anyone among Mennonites protested against it.

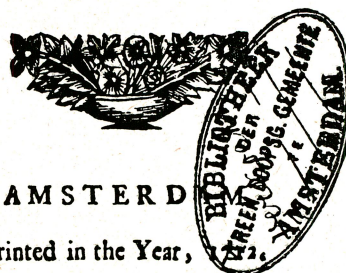
Van der Zijpp (DE VROEGERE DOOPSGEZINDEN EN DE KRIJGSDIENST [EARLY MENNONITES AND MILITARY SERVICE], p. 28 ff.) says regarding this:

## The Christian Confession

## CONFESSIO

Of the Faith of the harmless Christians, in the Netherlands known by the name of

MENNONISTS.



Courtesy, Pennsylvania German Society, Norristown, Pennsylvania.

"The history of our community is not always so very encouraging nor even comforting. In matters of nonresistance it shows the decline of a principle; after 1800 that principle is dead . . . Then the old Mennonites have gone . . . They have ceased to be sheep among wolves . . . Ministers of State, generals, a governor of East India, army chaplains, all these we count among our people. In the nineteenth century Mennonites have also been seen in the field of battle . . .

"In 1898 the personal-conscription Bill was introduced . . .

"In pursuance of an amendment (on the old Mennonite privilege of freedom from military service) Prime Minister Goeman Borgesius remarked: 'Nothing has transpired that Mennonites have any grave scruples against bearing arms as far as they are ordered to do so by law. . . . Mennonites have no serious objections at present.' In the First Chamber the Minister was supported by a Mennonite, saying: 'If the thesis that the Fatherland should not be defended and that weapons should not be borne for the sake of the Fatherland were a part of the doctrine of the Mennonite Community, I would not be a member of it another day.' The Bill was passed with a great majority. A Mennonite professor

turn to col. 1; page 3

## The Value of a Historical Library

ELMER E. S. JOHNSON

The course of this world is history. This conception prevailed in the minds of ancient people living in the distant centuries before Christ was born. The Scriptures give us definite instruction to study the course of the people of this world. A very definite text for us to remember is the one recorded in Deut. 32:7 in the Song of Moses where it is written: "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."

This means we as Christians are also to see to it that our children continually learn upon what our faith in the Lord Christ is founded. It means also that we never cease to inform those coming after us what the relations between God and men were. Thus also it means that we continue to inform ourselves about our past relations with one another so as to place us upon our daily guard against any selfishness or wickedness which can so easily beset us. Therefore we should record and read and reread honorable records of decent living and clean speech. This is local history. The more you busy yourself with a study of the story of your own family, who they were, where they lived in times past, what they read and did and thought, by just so much the more you enlarge your own knowledge. And so you will be able to "remember the days of old," but much more than that, you will be able to tell your children the beautiful story of your people. Personally, I am interested in history because my mother of sainted memory had told me before I was ten years of age all about the early history of my family on her side of the house. She had gone back in telling me that story for more than two hundred years.

As Christians we should seek to know the story of the Bible. All too often we content ourselves by reading the Scriptures, but remain woefully ignorant how they came into existence. As one busies oneself by a study like this, one will indulge less in idle gossip. My mother was a busy housewife on a farm, but she always had time to read books about the serious business of living. All too often this last side is sadly neglected. There are clay tablets with writing upon them in the Schwenkfeld Library at Pennsburg that were written more than three thousand years before Christ was



born. Those tablets were the books of that early day. As many as eight hundred thousand were even at that time collected and placed into what we now speak of as a library.

Today there is an even greater importance for us to have libraries of history so that we may duly inform ourselves and our children. Our people primarily were a farming people. Their early life here in Pennsylvania was a hard life. Those who have made a study of such things tell us when the first iron plow was introduced it took nineteen farm people to raise enough food to feed themselves and one other city person; now they tell us in this highly developed machine age nineteen farm people produce enough food to feed themselves, and fifty-six city persons, and also ten more in foreign countries. The danger now threatening our population is that we become so thoroughly machine-minded as to leave less and less space in our minds for spiritual and ethical thinking. We are in graver danger than ever to become more and more selfish and less and less concerned about our church, the Sabbath, and our salvation. Here then is a first essential that we surround ourselves with the literary values available. While it is a very expensive business for every one to secure such a library, and, so far as the other literature is concerned, it is impossible, therefore we need to provide places for such collections in order that the generations to come may see and study the records their forefathers have left behind.

When you inform your son or daughter who the forefathers were, you give them something to think about. Every single individual in this audience has had 510 ancestors within the last three hundred years. Acquaint yourself with the record of each and every ancestor as far back as you possibly can and you will gain a volume of sound learning. As you do this you will learn of deeds of charity, acts of kindness, clean speech, happy home and family life; you will also find endless examples showing how to meet hard problems, and how to overcome them, how to carry a great sorrow. There will be many lessons in character building, so important at this very time. Your mind will become occupied with fine things to think about. Most of your ancestors were very noble in their living and in their personal relationship with members of their own family and with their friends and neighbors.

The church and all its work becomes more important in your life as you acquaint yourself with the life story of those who have gone before you. Here in this very Bedminster area marvelous things were accomplished two hundred and more years ago by the Mennonites and their neighbors of other confessions of faith. What those forefathers and mothers here achieved amid unbelievable difficulties and hardships is of the utmost importance in the life and character of

their posterity. How well do you know that story? Our Mennonite forefathers unfortunately left few official records for us to read and from which we might learn of all they thought and did. However, they have left us many footprints; these may still be read. They have left us the records of their sales of land in the form of parchment deeds or land titles. From these we may secure the names of children and to whom they were married. Similarly also valuable information is obtained from wills, as, for example, a will like that of the pioneer Henry Funk in Franconia dated June 13, 1759, wherein he states, "My first wife, Anna, died on the 8th of July 1758, and as there is no second wife there are no orders necessary in that respect." Then Henry Funk goes on to say, "As my daughter, *Esther*, is lame in all her limbs, and until this day could neither stand nor walk of herself, and it is not probable that she will ever learn to walk; it is therefore necessary that provision should be made for the support and care for, this, my daughter." He gives her (1) "a good full suit of new clothes, such as are customary among us"; (2) "bedstead and good bedding, namely, for below and for covering, and pillows all well furnished"; (3) "four hundred pounds of good current money out of my funds"; (4) "Whereas my late father-in-law, Christian Moyer, bequeathed to the said lame *Esther* the sum of £3 which three pounds I received, so those three pounds, including the interest thereof, shall be added to her share, for the use of the said *Esther*. It is therefore my will that the said *Esther* shall be well kept and cared for, of the same which I, by the blessings of God, have been able to give and bequeath to her, by my executors and their brothers and sisters as long as she shall remain in this poor and helpless condition."

What a touching story that reveals! Therein is expressed a loving father's affection and care for so helpless a child, and even that of a deceased grandfather. How uplifting to read something like this! Only an old will, but what inspiring information! It shows the character of people two hundred years ago. Moreover, from it we learn that the name of Henry Funk's wife was Anna Moyer, daughter of Christian Moyer. Where else is that fact recorded in a document?

But that is not all: to carry out this part of the will Henry Funk appoints the "Diakonoi (Deacons) in the church of Christ, denominated Mennonites, among whom I have served as minister for a long time, namely: Christian Moyer and Michael Derstein and their successors in office." Here we have documentary evidence of the prolonged ministry of Henry Funk and the names of the two deacons at the time. The will also names other children: John Funk, his oldest son, Christian Funk, Abraham Funk; his daughters: viz., Barbara, Anna, Mary, Fronica, and Elizabeth Funk. From this

will we also learn that the Mennonites maintained an alms fund. This will is a good illustration of the importance of such a document for historical purposes. There are many varieties of papers, mostly written in German, whose contents contribute to our knowledge of the religious, social, and communal life of our Mennonite ancestors. All such documents should be carefully preserved and placed where they are protected and saved from destruction, and where they may be consulted by those competent to do so.

Then too the Mennonites had and read a considerable list of printed books in both the Dutch and German languages. From this printed literature they not only gained much knowledge but a deep spiritual and moral inspiration. Whether one is able to read these books now or not they still have a very significant value in lifting us out of our mechanical ways of thinking and acting. Every now and then one discovers that Mennonites, instead of preserving or donating such literature to institutions, libraries, or archives for safe keeping and proper uses, have sold it for gold. Such people have taken much the same attitude toward these priceless possessions as did the disciples when "Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head . . . . When his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and, given to the poor." You recall Jesus rebuked them. I have in my time come across more than one instance where Mennonites parted for gold with some of the finest examples of a deep refinement once prevailing among their forebears.

What greater moment can there be for a Christian body like yours or ours to discern the signs in this money-hungry age but to lay our hands upon those things which uplift the soul and mind? We boast in a loyalty to truth, the enthusiasm for the support of such loyalty the historic spirit alone can engender. We must learn to have a keen appreciation of all the shades of meaning which a word has before we can use it in a sentence. That is another reason why we should have a live interest in everything which went into the development of race and family. The whole Scripture was produced as a scheme of education and it was founded upon an historic spirit. You read in the Book of Deuteronomy, particularly chapters IV, VI, and XI, about the instruction of the children concerning ancient events. The New Testament begins with genealogy—the story of the family. The ministry of a St. Peter, St. Stephen, or a St. Paul addressing itself to the Jews rebuked them for quenching the historic spirit.

Today this interest among Mennonites in matters historical is emphatically revived to the end that we forget not the ennobling thinking so characteristic



among our forebears. There are four significant centers for historic research where the mind of Mennonite youth may become saturated with the remembrance of the good wrought through "the years of many generations." In these centers they are again asked to make inquiry, go "ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." Both the fathers and the elders, however, need these centers where they may consult the documents and inform themselves. These centers are located today at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas; Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana; Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio, and here in Pennsylvania at Pennsylvania State University in the Schwenkfeld Library. Right here in our midst we have a Mennonite historical collection of the first significance, one that is steadily growing. The new corporation is self-perpetuating and when the new fireproof building is erected there will be very ample facility to help all who seek information. The Schwenkfeld Library has \$107,500.00 in cash or securities for the erection of the new building. This money was given by a Schwenkfelder whose mother and all her ancestors were Mennonites.

Hereford, Pennsylvania.

#### DUTCH PEACE GROUP

(Continued from first page)

of that time wrote concerning it: 'There is nothing strange in these things . . . . People have been accustomed to what was condemned on account of conscientious objections in previous ages.' So the old principle seemed dead.

"Nevertheless, it survived until now as an undercurrent. And more, this current came to the surface again. The 'Action-Group of Mennonites against conscription' (Arbeidsgroep van Doopsgezinden tegen den Krijgsdienst) existing among us from 1923 till 1940, is evidence of this."

Fritz Kuiper writes on this last subject ("Onze Arbeidsgroep" in *"Evang. en Krijgsdienst,"* p. 30 ff.):

"The great war [World War I] has awakened the conscience of Mennonites. . . . An action-meeting during a general meeting of Mennonites in 1921 drafted the following conclusions: 'About forty among us declare disapproval of military conscription and participation in war in virtue of our Christian conviction.'

"As a result of this a supporting fund for conscientious objectors was started to make possible judicial assistance. When the law on conscientious objection of 1923 was passed, an advisory committee was formed, for the law was systematically suppressed. This C.O. Law of 1923 has as its most important article: 'Whosoever has conscientious objections against joining in military service on account of his conviction that he is not allowed to slay his fellow man can apply to the Minister of War with a supplication, etc. The Minister decides after advice from a Committee . . . . If the

objections be granted, such a person can be sent to work at some other branch of state service with dispensation of military service . . . this service in general lasting for twelve months longer than real service would.'

"Besides this may be mentioned the work of the group to deepen the insight and to intensify the conviction of group-members, the publication of pamphlets . . . and meetings of the workers. An inquiry among Mennonite clergymen revealed that more than one third of them were standing on the side of the group."

This earlier working group was in existence till 1940, when it, together with many other humanitarian groups and associations, was abolished by the German occupation. During its activity under the Dutch regime it had to deal with opposition, which came from within the bosom of the Mennonite Community. A committee [of Dutch Mennonites] was formed to warn against "one-sided enlightenment on military service" as our action was called. This proves clearly the lack of sympathy for the old Mennonite ideas. The nationalistic tendencies in our people increased during the last war, so that among Mennonites too there were many who then and after the war forsook our ideals, if ever they did entertain them at all.

#### *Beginnings of the Present*

Against this background should be seen our present Peace Group (Vredesgroep). It was founded in September, 1946, as a restoration of the old working group but partly with new principles. Its constitution reads as follows:

"The Mennonite Peace Group will in obedience to Jesus Christ, our Master, and impelled by His love, endeavor to give within a sin-torn world, a witness of the peace convictions and pure spiritual fortitude which will overcome the evil with good. They know that they can only accomplish this as their members, in close relationship with Christ, again and again in prayer and dedication, banish their weaknesses and renew their strength by His strength.

"The Peace Group attempts to attain this goal as follows:

"(1) Through striving after a personal, vital witness on the part of each member (acknowledging as a duty, the loving commandments of Christ, even toward enemies, in order to attain a Biblical non-resistance), through willingness to surrender egotistical self-seeking, rendering time, and money and making any other difficult sacrifices that the Master may ask.

"(2) Through a strengthening of the convictions in our churches, so that people will help each other in a mutual sense of responsibility and intercession.

"(3) Through a giving of spiritual and material help to those who as a result of their Christian peace witness find themselves in difficulties, especially to those, who in obedience to Christ, feel themselves called to refuse military service; aiding them for the duration of their

service period and even after, and co-operating to establish a civilian camp in our land similar to Civilian Public Service in America, for a service of love.

"(4) Co-operating in relief work in larger relationships."

The Mennonite Peace Group is, as well as possible, working together with others who have the same ultimate goals or who have the same positive concrete points in view. It is an independent part of the Elspeet Union (Elspeet Vereeniging).

#### *Present Activities*

To implement the purposes of this constitution there was immediately instituted a so-called "Peace Office" to give advice and help to our younger men who have conscientious objections against military service. The leader is Rev. T. O. Hylkema; his direct assistant is Bro. C. Inja. The office was set up in Amsterdam, but here and there in the country were found congenial ministers and others who, when young people were asking advice in the matter of military service, helped them and if necessary brought them into contact with the Peace Office.

About the activities of this Peace Office the following particulars should be mentioned: The Central Peace Bureau, which comes together every week, talks over the cases of the conscientious objectors which have just come up. It is often necessary to seek contact with the young men or with their parents. Ds. Hylkema took matters such as this as his own special responsibility from September, 1946, to May, 1947. Often decisions had to be made which could not wait. Sometimes such matters had to be decided in a day's time. Through him, in the name of the Bureau, contact was sought with the Government. Many interviews took place with regard to the possible formation of C.P.S. camps in the Netherlands. A proposal was introduced suggesting how the civilian service of the Government could well be set up and directed, and how, thereby, one or more persons in the leadership could be taken in, who would be spiritually like-minded with the conscientious objectors. Ds. Hylkema was appointed to the "Council for Advice and Examination of the Conscientious Objectors." This is of great importance in the development of the whole treatment of conscientious objectors and also to the development of the Civilian Public Service camps.

By the middle of March, 1947, fifty-seven young men were enrolled by the Peace Bureau who had objected to military service. Now by the middle of July, 1947, this number has risen to ninety-one young men. With all of these young men there is correspondence, interviewing, and the parents are visited. Advice is given to follow a certain line of action, or with regard to the possibility of using a lawyer in order to assist the cause before the court-martial.

It is obvious that among the Mennonite young people, a generation is growing up which wishes to follow after the Word



of our Master and His commandments of love. For this we are extraordinarily thankful. One thing especially strikes us; during the examination before the Board (Tribunal) again and again there are Mennonite young men who have very little Bible knowledge. They also know practically nothing about our Mennonite history. This is a great failure of our brotherhood. Here a neglect of our old Mennonite tradition is apparent, and an indifference with respect to the Bible, which is becoming a stumbling block to many of our young men. It is apparent that they have a deep inner feeling: "We cannot take part in the war." But it is also apparent that they have not thoroughly thought through the reason why they cannot take part. The outcome of it is, that such a young man before the Tribunal is rejected by the law on incorrect grounds. On this point, occasion should be found in our brotherhood for a thorough reconsideration with regard to these things.

Thus the work of the Bureau has existed: Spiritually to support our conscientious objectors; to stand beside them with advice and action; to give material help if that is necessary. The Bureau also organizes regular campaigns for support of the conscientious objectors.

You will readily perceive that in the Peace Office the heart of our work and group is beating. In the short period of its existence it has already done excellent work under the energetic direction of Rev. Hylkema. And still much more remains to be done, of which I would like to tell you the following:

#### Our Publication

Since the end of last year printed letters were issued regularly informing our members and sympathizers about the activities of our group. Here the question of the name was discussed: should this simply be a peace group with an emphasis on nonresistance, and is it advisable, that this term then be maintained in its negativity or should nonresistance be explained more as a form of spiritual life? In these LETTERS ideas were given regarding the meetings of our members, especially the question as to what spirit and form should best be led. We try to learn in silence the will of God and expect thus to receive His power to act. Often one feels that here is more really God's community than with the encircling Mennonites and when this is the case one arrives at the question how to relate to the comparatively halfheartedness of others. That is why articles appear about our place in the fraternity of Mennonites, from which we quote the following passage:

"For the sake of unity which we Mennonites love so much, we are asked again and again to make no separation in our fraternity and to that purpose to abandon something of our principles. Give up, it is said, nonresistance; otherwise many people cannot join the peace group; and others make other demands. We like unity and even close union; we confess

that this exists too insufficiently among us. But we cannot give up anything of that which Christ has charged upon His community and entrusted to it. As Mennonites we are to save the pledge entrusted to us; the advocating for the Lord's commandment of love towards enemies belongs to it too. We feel certain we are working for the maintenance of our fraternity; we try to place it somewhat more upon the old foundations from which it has seriously slid."

In the next issue of LETTERS a testimony regarding our position will be inserted about the war recently broken out in Indonesia.

One of our members, at present in public service as a C.O., has translated the booklet of Edward Yoder: *TEN REASONS WHY C.O.'S CANNOT JOIN THE ARMY*. Other translations are waiting to be issued. Quite recently there came from the press a book written by Rev. Hylkema and Mrs. Wuit-van Maasijk, *Explanatory Notes and Exposition for Personal Religious Life of the Gospel according to St. Luke*, which though not particularly written for the peace group, may prove of great significance to our meetings.

#### Looking Ahead

One of our concerns is to take a hand in relief work. We have already started this on a small scale and are trying to find our way somewhere between the M.C.C., the General Mennonite Society, and other Dutch Peace Movements. The General Society (A.D.S.), as is perhaps well known, does not take the stand of nonresistance; and again and again the question arises whether we should participate in the general cadre of our fraternity or disassociate ourselves from it and act only on our own. It is expected, however, that we will be able to find more fixed lines at the various conferences to be held this summer.

We would like to have in the future a kind of peace institute. Apart from temporary conferences we naturally need permanent peace institutes located within the reach of everyone and providing an opportunity to be prepared and strengthened by study, prayer, fellowship with peace friends, and practical enlightenment for work of charity and peace. For the present time, however, we cannot state anything more about this.

Further, we contemplate the publication of written Bible courses to educate our Mennonite people in the Scriptures and also courses to disseminate the knowledge of Mennonite principles. We would also like to issue a catechism to acquaint young people with our principles and the life of "nonresistant" Mennonites. We have also given thought to a book of Mennonite readings.

But these are dreams for the future. This can only happen if the movement grows. At present a rather large group is meeting in Amsterdam, a small group in Leeuwarden, and further a number of dispersed members. We are doing our best to extend, and we hope shortly to make some progress. But it is not easy

to enrapture our countrymen and we need a lot of patience. We are making progress, however, and the percentage of congenial spirits among our ministers is not unsatisfactory. These members must work hard, and here often lies the difficulty: the time of most of them is limited by all sorts of activities.

Let us hope that people will gradually get to understand more the importance of our work, also for our Fraternity, and that eventually may be realized the image of the future as seen by optimists: that our people will form the majority, at least the heart of our Fraternity, so that after some years the old spirit may come to life again in our midst. In this hope we know ourselves to be supported by all of you.

## Sustaining Members for 1948

The Mennonite Historical Bulletin is distributed quarterly to the members of the Mennonite Historical Association. Dues for membership are one dollar per year. In addition to the regular members, there are sustaining members, who pay dues of five dollars each year. For 1948, the following have contributed the amount necessary to become sustaining members:

Ezra Beachy  
Jacob L. Clemmer  
Martin C. Eby  
Christian N. Frank  
Musser S. Herr  
Maris W. Hess  
Homer M. Kauffman  
Graybill G. Landis  
Ira D. Landis  
C. J. Kurtz  
J. M. Mast  
O. O. Miller  
Noah N. Sauder  
Mahlon A. Souder  
John C. Wenger  
Samuel S. Wenger

## Secret Baptisms in Ohio

*Sonnenberg (Swiss) Mennonite Congregation*

S. W. SOMMER

Some time ago you asked me to write to you the story of secret baptisms at the Sonnenberg Church. Here it is: All applicants for baptism were baptized in secret up to 1834. This custom was brought to America from Switzerland as a result of the persecution in the Reformation period.

On Easter Sunday, 1828, the first baptismal service was held. Five applicants were baptized by Bishop Daniel Steiner from the Crown Hill congregation.

Secret baptism was abolished in 1834 by Bishop Peter Schneck. Until 1841 baptismal services were held [annually] on Easter Sunday; since then on Good Friday. . . .

Millersburg, Ohio.



# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

Published quarterly by the Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference at Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, and distributed to the members of Mennonite Historical Association. **Editors:** John C. Wenger and Melvin Gingerich. **Associate Editors:** H. S. Bender, H. A. Brunk, J. C. Clemens, S. F. Coffman, Paul Erb, J. C. Fretz, Ira D. Landis, C. Z. Mast, J. B. Smith, and S. S. Wenger. Dues for regular membership (one dollar per year) or for sustaining membership (five dollars or more annually) may be sent to the treasurer of the Association, Ira D. Landis, Route 3, Lititz, Pennsylvania. Articles and news items may be addressed to either editor at Goshen, Indiana. **Office Editor:** Paul Erb.

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JULY, 1949

No. 3

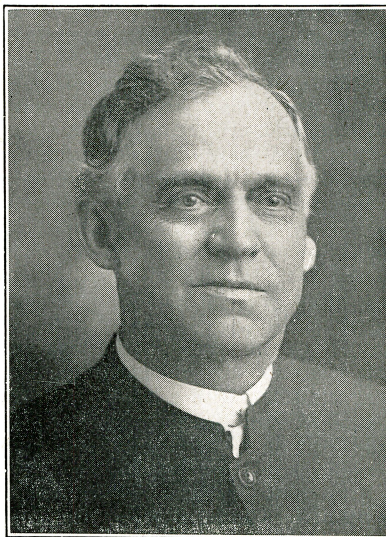
## TILLMAN M. ERB 1865-1929

PAUL ERB

One of the outstanding leaders who helped to develop a number of scattered frontier settlements on the Great Plains into efficient conferences with a missionary and educational program of their own was Tillman M. Erb. He was born on a farm west of Mt. Joy, Lancaster County, Pa., on Nov. 3, 1865, but at the age of nineteen went to Harvey County, Kansas, where his father, Deacon Jacob B. Erb, settled on a farm near Newton and helped to establish on the raw prairies one of the pioneer Mennonite settlements, the Pennsylvania congregation, so named because of the origin of the settlers. Almost two years later, in 1886, Tillman married a Lancaster County girl, Lizzie Ann Hess, of Ephrata, whom he had met when she came to Kansas to visit her brothers.

Herein there is a figure. For while he labored to develop the church in his own section, he always had an eye to the larger unity of the church. He was interested in bringing the Kansas-Nebraska Conference into the fellowship of the developing General Conference. When he helped to start the Kansas City Mission, he was concerned to bring it under the supervision of the general Mission Board. When he became a prime mover for a school in the West, he carried the petition to the annual meeting of the Mennonite Board of Education. He was always an advocate of such movements as the organization of the Mennonite Publication Board. He was one of the young men whom John S. Coffman called to sit on the platform of the Prairie Street Church that memorable evening when our first foreign missionaries were chosen. He was very much a Kansan, but no less a man of broad vision and wide interests.

Brother Erb and his wife were converted shortly after their marriage, and became members of the Pennsylvania congregation between Newton and Hesston, being baptized by Bishop Brundage, July 31, 1887. Except for five years at Harper, Kansas, they were at home in this congregation the rest of their days. In 1890 Bro. Erb was elected Sunday-school superintendent. On June 18, 1893, he was ordained to the ministry by Bishop B. F. Hamilton. Soon afterwards with R. J. Heatwole, lay evangelist, he toured isolated districts of the area. They traveled by horse and buggy, often driving thirty to fifty miles a day. Services were held in schoolhouses and homes.



Tillman M. Erb

For many years he drove to meet appointments in Kansas and Oklahoma churches. One of the writer's early memories is what seemed to him a dangerous crossing with his father in a buggy through the waters of the Salt Fork near Jet, Okla. On Oct. 23, 1898, he was chosen by lot and ordained to the office of bishop, with S. C. Miller and Albrecht Schiffler officiating. In his diary he wrote in his usual succinct style: "Thus the Lord has called me to the most important office of the church. May we prove efficient and true workers for Him." He exercised the bishop functions in a number of congregations in Kansas, Oklahoma, and states farther west. He was active in the Kansas-Nebraska and later the Missouri-Kansas conferences, serving a number of times as moderator. He did some evangelistic work. Although not a fluent speaker, in hundreds of sermons he sounded forth a clear, evangelical note. He knew and loved his Lord, and led many into a genuine Christian experience and service for the Lord. His forte, however, was administration rather than preaching.

As a means of livelihood Bro. Erb was a creamery man and later a dairy farmer. From headquarters at Hesston he supervised a string of skimming stations. When the hand separators came in, he encouraged farmers to buy them and diversify their farming. He operated creameries at Newton and Harper. In this business he developed the abilities which the Lord was to use later in a church

(Continued on page 4)

## The Hearing of False Prophets or Antichrists

*An Anonymous Swiss Brethren Tract of  
about 1525-30*

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY J. C. WENGER

That which love both for God and for one's neighbor prohibits or binds,—and on the contrary all that is mine is hostile (Matt. 5)—he who is a true Christian will not set aside nor wish to be free of. But now love commands (Matt. 7, 16) one to beware of the false prophets who come to us in sheep's clothing (that is, attached to the letter) and who will indeed not allow [the people] to follow freely but will bring them into subjection with the hypocrisy which they create. Yea, and what does God complain of more vigorously through almost all the prophets than that His people refuse to hear Him, but run after the false prophets who have nothing to offer them except the dreams and opinions of their own hearts (Jer. 23, 27; Ezek. 13). But would we expect the lambs of Christ to hearken to the voice of the hireling (John 10)? Would one indeed find the living Christ with the desolation and abomination of the dead Pharisees and scribes (Luke 24)? Should not a people seek unto their God (Isaiah 8)? But should one seek the living among the dead (Matt. 26)? How does the sweet flour of Christ [agree] with the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mark 16)? What concord hath Christ with Belial? And [what agreement hath] the temple of God with idols (II Cor. 6)? Or the yoke of Christ and that of the antichrist (Matt. 13). It would then be the case that idols might speak the Word of God, although it is written, The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. Eyes have they but they see not, a mouth have they but they speak not, etc. (Psalm 115). What profiteth the image that its maker hath carved? and the idol which manifests fraud,—upon which its maker trusteth, so that he maketh dumb idols? Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; and to the dumb stone, Stand up, it shall teach something! Behold, it is laid over with silver and gold, and there is no breath in it (Hab. 2). It would then be the case that both the papists and Lutherans, yea all others also of their kind, preachers who proclaim letter for spirit, yea human commands for God's commandment, and yet preach Christ so openly to such people; Ye generation of vipers, how can ye speak the good when



ye are evil, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (Matt. 12)? For this reason therefore He also saith, Beware of the scribes who come to you in long garments, who receive greetings in the market, and take the chief seats in the synagogues, and the higher tables, and who devour widows' houses, etc. (Mark 12). Therefore Paul also says, Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision, etc. (Phil. 3). But everywhere it is said (so that one may indeed escape the persecution of the false prophets and avoid the cross) that such prohibition of love does not forbid a bodily following but only the attachment and consent of the heart. Therefore it is written, Prove all things, hold fast that which is good (1 Thes. 2). *Answer:* whatever man would wantonly and knowingly imbibe poison, imagining that his skill would prevent his being harmed, and would perish by his sportive act,—surely everyone would say that he perished by his wanton behavior. Whatever man would see openly before his eyes the fruit of an evil tree, or would see that many people died by eating of a certain food, and then would wish first of all to test the tree or the food as to whether they were evil or good, and would thereby poison himself,—surely every one would say that such a person had perished justly. Or would it be good, if a shepherd should, after a wolf had come among his sheep on two successive days and done great damage, on the third day make the wolf the keeper of the sheep in the hope that this time he would behave himself properly? He who (after being sufficiently informed of evil) through a wanton running after it wishes to make his own investigation, let him see to it that he does not plunge his neck into the pit which has been prepared, and perish wantonly in the prepared net. Everywhere the apostles of the angel of darkness are now speaking, presenting themselves as the apostles of Christ (II Corinthians 11), to all those who wish sincerely to walk in the way. These [sincere believers] ought to flee as birds to their mountain, for they bend their bow and lay their arrow upon it, so that in the darkness they may shoot the souls of the living and put them to death (Psalm 11). Indeed it does stand written, He shall give his angels charge over thee to bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone (Psalm 91), but it also stands written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God (Deut. 6). Had Dinah, Jacob's daughter, remained at home and not strolled out to see the daughters of the land she would not have become a courtesan (Genesis thirty-four). But if anyone has such a great desire to listen to prophets who are known and demonstrated to be false, he is holding the very worst in his bosom. Insofar as he does not believe him he will be terrified by his ceaseless prattle so that he will not know how to escape,—just as it is said, one dare not set the louse on the fur, it will soon be inside. For this reason it is

Christian and prudent in these most evil days to do as Christ says, Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall do great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they should deceive even the elect (Matthew twenty-four). The abomination is now becoming evident in the holy place (Daniel 9, 11), and those who have posed for a long time as brethren are beginning to show openly their fury against the miserable, attacked flock of the Lord, so that by their own fruits, yea before all the world, they may be recognized and may make evident in deed that for a long time they have concealed themselves under the conceited sheep's clothing of Scripture (Matthew 7). Yea, do thou as the Lord through Isaiah commands, saying, Go thou, O my people, into thy chamber and shut thy door after thee, and remain hidden there for a little while until the wrath be passed over (Isaiah 26). For yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry. Now the just man shall live by his faith, but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him (Hebrews 10). Yea, He saith, If the righteous man turn away from his piety, and live unjustly so that he practices all the abominations of the godless, shall that man live? (Ezekiel 18). But the God of peace and the Father of mercy shall graciously deliver both you and us from the present power of darkness and of the antichrist through the revelation of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.—Reprinted from the October, 1947, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

## A Statement

STATEMENT CONCERNING A DIVISION IN THE MENNONITE CHURCH OF VIRGINIA IN THE YEAR 1825 AS MADE BY MARGARET BLOSSER, A DAUGHTER OF BISHOP PETER BURKHOLDER. SISTER BLOSSER WAS IN HER 21st YEAR AND HAD DISTINCT RECOLLECTION OF ALL THE INCIDENTS HEREIN DESCRIBED, SHE HAVING DIED ON APRIL 17th, 1895, AT THE AGE OF 90 YEARS, 6 MONTHS, AND 21 DAYS.

\* \* \*

Early in the year 1825 there occurred in the Mennonite Church in Virginia a separation, which for the period of about five years divided the members into two factions that were about equal in number. This estrangement came about by reason of one of the ministers, Frederick Rhodes, having for some time been attending some revival meetings held by United Brethren, but is said not to have taken any part in the meetings or rendered any assistance in the service; but others claimed that when he was called on he would sometimes lead in prayer.

He appeared to be a man well read in the Bible, but was not always able to explain himself as was his desire to do. As far as known there was no objection to the doctrine he preached, but on account of it becoming generally known that he had associated with the United Brethren in their meetings, and his manner of preaching becoming at times quite earnest and loud and seemingly in imitation of the loud and boisterous ways of the United Brethren in their meetings, a number of the Mennonite members became offended, and the feeling in time became so strong against him, that on Good Friday, April 1st, 1825, all the members who were offended met at the house of Jacob Blosser, where a letter was written, and all who agreed with the statements therein set forth signed their names to it.

The request was then made by those who signed this letter that the ministers take charge of it and go around to all the members to see who would and who would not sign it. This the ministers all refused to do. Then to accomplish their object, Jacob Blosser and Gabriel Heatwole went around with the letter and got what members they could, to put their names to it; so that in course of time the number of signers had reached about forty, which made about half of the Mennonite members in Rockingham and Augusta counties. A number of others signed who were children of parents belonging to the "offended party," and who had united with the church after the division.

The ministers who sided with the letter" or "offended party" were Bishop Henry Shank, his son "Hans" John Shank, in Rockingham County, and Isaac Roadcap in Augusta County—while the principal families who stood with them, were the Blossers, Wengers, Heatwoles, and Shanks.

Some time after these troubles arose, the "offended party" selected Benjamin Wenger and Abraham Heatwole as candidates for the ministry, and in casting a lot, Benjamin Wenger was the one who was chosen and ordained. Some time afterwards the same party ordained to the ministry David Burkholder who then lived at a point east of Harrisonburg. Up until this time the Mennonites in Virginia had no regularly established meetinghouses<sup>1</sup> for holding public worship, it being the custom to hold worship in private homes where it was most convenient for the people to come together. The "offended party" had ten such homes for holding meeting and the rule was to meet every two weeks and all services were conducted in the German language.

The ministers who had not sided with the "offended party" were Bishop Henry Rhodes,<sup>2</sup> Peter Burkholder, Daniel Good, and Frederick Rhodes of Rockingham County, and Michael Stauffer of Augusta County. As the membership adhering to them had only a few places where it was convenient to hold services, it was at about this time that the propriety of



building special houses for holding worship was decided on.

It was at this time that the first church at the Pike, then called Moyer's Meeting-house, was built, which was in 1825. In the next year, 1826, another meeting-house was built at Weaver's . . . , and as the work and expense of building were borne mostly by the Burkholder family, it was for some years known as the Burkholder meetinghouse. The meeting-house at Trissels was built before the church was divided. It was in this neighborhood and in the lower Linville Creek valley that most of the Mennonites in Rockingham County then lived—it being the home of the Ackers, Beerys, Branners, Brennemans, Drivers, Geils, Holsingers, Minnicks, Funks, Showalters, and Shanks, with some of the Rhodeses.

During the first three years of the division the strife and contention between the two factions waxed warm and the heat of argument between individuals frequently brought unhappy occasions between families of the same name. David Burkholder, one of the newly ordained ministers in the "offended party," made the bold claim that their people were the true Mennonite Church in Virginia and that their signed letter contained statements that would keep their children and generations that should live after them on the right side of the division.

On another occasion Peter Burkholder "proved" to "Hans" John Shank that they were making an idol of their letter, and that they were only a "letter party" and could stand on no other name. As a reply to this they said their opposers could only stand as "Frederick people," because they continued to fellowship with Frederick Rhodes and refused to disown him as a minister.

After continuing in this unhappy state of division for at least five years, two ministers from Pennsylvania by the name of Smith and Sherrich came to Virginia with the view of establishing harmony between the two contending factions, but met with no success.

Shortly after this another minister by the name of Peter Eby in company with three other ministers arrived from Pennsylvania, and by their efforts peace and harmony were again restored in the Virginia Church.

The two ministers who had been ordained by the "offended party" and all the members they had admitted to fellowship were duly recognized, and Frederick Rhodes was also allowed to continue his ministry. The last four ministers who were in charge of the situation were in session at Weaver's Church where an impartial hearing was given to both sides; where in conclusion of the hearing, due notice was given that Frederick Rhodes had not transgressed the Gospel in attending meetings and associating with the United Brethren, it being common at that time in Maryland and Pennsylvania for United Brethren ministers and Mennonite ministers to travel together and hold joint meetings—and sometimes even

commune together. The U.B.'s at that time were a plain people and spoke German like the Mennonites.

These ministers also decided that all those who had taken offense at Frederick Rhodes and signed the letter of April 1st, 1825, had withdrawn themselves not only from the Mennonite Church in Virginia, but from the Church in Pennsylvania and other states also.

With this announcement, the seceding ones were admonished to admit their mistake and be again reconciled to the Church. They were slow at first to accept this decision and some time was spent waiting, when at last Bishop Henry Shank arose as spokesman for the rest and said in German—

"Shunst denn ist es shicklich das mir bei der Gemeinde stehn."

Bishop Eby quickly responded with: "Now sel iss en schöner Fuss."

It was from this meeting and the commendable step here taken by Bishop Henry Shank that the long-sought-for reconciliation was accomplished and the Mennonite Church in Virginia once more became a unit.

*Written originally by Jonas Blosser as stated to him by his mother Margaret Blosser, and afterwards revised and rewritten by L. J. Heatwole, May 3, 1895. Submitted for publication by Timothy Showalter, Broadway, Virginia.*

1 This is evidently in error as Trissels was built in 1822.

2 This seems to be the only evidence that Henry Rhodes was a bishop.

# A HISTORIC LETTER BY GERHARD ROOSEN OF HAMBURG —ALTONA (1612-1711)

Translated and Edited by  
JOHN B. MAST

The following letter written to the brotherhood in Alsace by the prominent Mennonite minister of northern Germany, Gerhard Roosen, in reply to a letter he had received from Christian Blum, was first published by Bishop Joseph Stucky of Illinois in July, 1871, in a booklet entitled *Eine Begebenheit die sich in Deutschland und in der Schweiz von 1693 bis 1700 zugetragen hat*. The fourth edition of this booklet was published by L. A. Miller of Arthur, Illinois, in June, 1936. It was also published with another collection of such letters at Kaiserslautern, Germany, in 1909, in *Der Christliche Gemeinde Kalender*. The editor of this Kalender had secured his *ungedruckte Aktenstücke* (handwritten documents) from his intimate friend, Peter Kipfer, of Raingut near Langnau in the Emme Valley of Switzerland. This editor states that this collection of letters has been a well-preserved 90-page antique of the Kipfer family's possession. In a footnote he also refers to Roosen's unusual vitality, in that, at the age of eighty-five, he had

traveled far into Frisia [probably afoot], a distance of a hundred and twenty miles, and that he died an accidental death at the age of ninety-nine years, eight and a half months.

From the implication of his letter it appears as though uniform nonconformity of dress had not been generally practiced by the Mennonite brotherhood before the dawn of the eighteenth century, and was perhaps a greater issue in the Amman-Reist controversy than is often recognized. The letter follows:

December 21, 1697

Dear beloved friends: In my thoughts I have often been with you during this long wearisome war [French conquest of King Louis XIV], and have worried about your situation, for it must be difficult to maintain stability when one is obliged to flee here, and another there; which may eventually result in complete scatterment. For this reason I have for some time wished for an opportunity to write you a letter, but did not know how I might get it to you, for in the past year I have sent several letters to the Palatinate but had no response. Now today I received a letter from Christian Blum, in which he mentions the reasons for your reminiscence of me, and the consideration of gratitude given me at your conference.

I have thus been attracted by an intrinsic affection, and with my letter will also visit you again, although it cannot occur bodily, due to old age, the distance, and the dangers involved. Wherein I may well say with the Apostle Paul: For though I am absent in the flesh, yet in the Spirit I am present with you, through our common faith (Col. 2:5). It is painful for me to hear of your oppression, while we are living undisturbed in both temporal and spiritual peace. In the temporal I hope you may soon have peace, provided it is not brought about by the so-called Christian persecution. [The term "Christian persecution" is not used here in the usual sense. The "oppression" referred to above has to do with the French dragoonades, who were quartered in the homes of Protestants, and were free to disrupt family life by the disgrace and insult of the womenhood of their hosts; such disorders were sanctioned by rulers who posed as dignitaries of the Roman Church, and urged as a means of converting them to their ecclesiastical system. It denotes an oppression conducted by Christians; hence the term, "so-called Christian persecution."—J. B. M.] I am concerned over the annexation of Strassbourg and Alsace [former German city and province] to France; here remains the admonition of the Lord Christ to follow him with patience. Matt. 10.

I am indeed sorry that you have been so disturbed by those who think highly of themselves, and make laws of things which are not upheld in the Gospel. Had it been specified in the Apostolic letters how or wherewith a believer should be clothed, or whether he should go in this or that country and this were



disobeyed, then these had something of which to speak; but it is more contrary, as pertains to the Gospel, to affix one's conscience to a pattern of the hats, clothes, stockings, shoes, or the hair of the head, or make a distinction in which country one lives: and then, for one to undertake the enforcement of such regulations by punishing with the ban all who will not accept them, and to expel from the church, as a leaven, those who do not wish to avoid those thus punished, though neither the Lord Jesus in his Gospel or his holy Apostles have bound us to external things, nor deemed it expedient to provide such regulations and laws. I agree with what the Apostle Paul says in Colossians 2 [verse 16], that the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God is not obtained "in meat or in drink," nor in this or that, in the form or pattern of clothing, to which things our dear Saviour does not oblige us.

Wherefore then does our friend, Jacob Amman, undertake to make laws of such things for the people, and to expel from the church, those who will not obey him? If he considers himself a courier of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and seeks to administer the letter of the Law, then he must not wear two coats, nor carry money in his purse, or shoes on his feet [Matt. 10:10]. If he does not adhere to the letter of his Lord, how dare he insist on obedience from his fellow men in regulations he has not received from his Lawmaker? Oh, that he might do as the Apostle Paul has done, in the fear of the Lord; showing meekness to all men. The counsel of the Apostle is, that the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak [Rom. 15:1-7].

In all of Paul's letters we do not find one word in which he has given regulations concerning the forms of clothing believers should have, but he instructed in all things to condescend to men of low estate [Rom. 12:16] according to all decency and modesty [I Tim. 2:19]. I hold that it is becoming to adapt the manner of dress to the customs of one's environments, but it is reasonable that we abstain from luxuries, pride, and carnal worldly lusts; not immediately adopting the latest styles and fashions of apparel, which is certainly something to be re-proved, but when it has come into common use then it is honorable to follow in such common apparel and walk in humility. But thanks be to God, I do not desire showy array or worldly lusts, and have always worn nearly the same pattern of clothes, but if I had dressed in modern fashion, should I then, for this reason be excommunicated? This would be unjust and contrary to Scripture. The Lord has indeed made regulations in the church of God, for punishment of the contentious, and those who conduct themselves contrary to the ordinances of God, as set forth in the Gospel. Herein it must be determined whether the things we wish to bind are also bound there, or are commanded to be bound.

The Holy Scriptures must be our unit of measurement: to this we must yield,

not running before it, but following; and that not untimely, but with care, fear, and regret, for it is a dangerous venture to step into the judgment of God and bind that which is not bound in heaven.

So much written by love and truth to your service and instruction in things worth while. I can hardly leave off writing to you. The beloved heavenly Father and God of consolation sustain and strengthen you in all oppressions, and bless you in body and soul, to His honor and to your salvation. Amen. From me, your Brother,

Gerhard Roosen of Hamburg.

# TILLMAN M. ERB, 1865-1929

(Continued from first page)

institution. In 1900 he purchased his father's farm and developed a farm dairy business, retailing the products in Newton. In 1910 he moved to a farm near Hesston.

The Erb home was blessed with eleven children, four boys and seven girls. One daughter died in infancy; another burned to death in a tragic explosion in 1912 which also burned Bro. Erb so badly that for seven weeks he could not write in his diary which was otherwise uninterrupted for nearly sixty years. For a year he did not walk. After two more years one leg was amputated because of unhealed sores. Many years later, in 1929, after years of suffering, the other leg was amputated because of the development of cancerous tissue. From the effects of this operation he died. Bro. Erb took a great deal of satisfaction in his home life. His children have many happy memories of a home in which work and play, religion and culture, all had their rightful place. Family worship was never omitted. There was much singing around the organ. The children learned to work, but they also had opportunity for education and social life. Nine children grew to maturity. Anna married L. O. King, a minister, two of whose sons are now ministers. Allen is a bishop, superintendent of the Mennonite Hospital, La Junta, Colo., and for four years moderator of Mennonite General Conference. Mabel is the widow of James Kauffman, oldest son of Daniel Kauffman. Paul, a minister, has been teacher and administrator at Hesston and Goshen colleges, and is now editor of the *Gospel Herald*. Ruth, a nurse, married Clarence Ebersole. Jacob is a farmer at Wellman, Iowa. Amy is the wife of a dairy farmer, E. D. Hershberger. Tillman teaches in the high school at Denver, Colo. Leah is the wife of A. R. Yordy. All but the three youngest are Mennonites.

Probably Bro. Erb's greatest single contribution was in connection with Hesston College and Bible School. He had been disappointed in not being able to get more education himself. He wanted his children to have the advantages he lacked. He had represented his district for a few years on the Mennonite Board

of Education. One Sunday afternoon in his home with some visitors the conversation turned to schools. Out of that came a question to the next session of conference relative to the establishment of a school in the West. The action was favorable, and a request was sent to the Board of Education. This board, in its 1908 meeting, appointed a committee to locate the school and effect an organization. Bro. Erb was on this committee. The school was located at Hesston, largely because of the offer of his brother-in-law, A. L. Hess, to donate eighty acres of land. T. M. Erb was elected business manager of the new school, and in September, 1908, building was begun. The school began operations in 1909. Concerning that year Bro. Erb wrote in his diary, "It has marked quite an epoch in the history for me, since we got the new school at Hesston built and started." As chairman of the local board to the time of his death, he had an influential part in the development of the institution, including the selection of personnel and the growth of policies and traditions. Through twenty years he saw the academy become a college and send forth a large number of young men and women into the active work of the church. His last report, of the many which revealed a good bookkeeper's meticulous care, showed total resources and assets of over \$100,000.

Even the end of his life seems, in the providence of God, to have been well managed. Granted a leave of absence in the fall of 1928, he started on a trip through the East and South to visit relatives. In Philadelphia a specialist advised him to return home for an amputation. On Jan. 13 he addressed a conjoint meeting of the Pennsylvania and Hesston congregations in an earnest appeal to stand true to the principles of the Mennonite Church. As he left the hall to be taken to the hospital he turned at the door and waved what he must have felt was a farewell. The operation took place the next day. But his body could not overcome the shock, and he died early on the morning of January 25. "If God wills, I'll be ready to go any time," was his last diary entry. He lies buried in the Pennsylvania cemetery, beside the church where he ministered so long, a quarter of a mile from the place where he began his happy married life, and only a few miles from the college campus which is his most eloquent monument.

Scottdale, Pa.

# HISTORICAL COMMITTEE MEETS

J. C. WENGER, Secretary

On Monday, April 11, 1949, the Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference met at the country home of Ira D. Landis, Lititz, Pennsylvania. There was an almost perfect attendance, J. B. Smith alone finding himself unable to meet with the group. Mrs. Landis and daughters served two excellent meals to the committee and its visitors in good Lancaster County style.



# MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

Published quarterly by the Historical Committee of Mennonite General Conference at Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and distributed to the members of Mennonite Historical Association. **Editors:** John C. Wenger and Melvin Gingerich. **Associate Editors:** H. S. Bender, H. A. Brunk, J. C. Clemens, S. F. Coffman, Paul Erb, J. C. Fretz, Ira D. Landis, C. Z. Mast, J. B. Smith, and S. S. Wenger. Dues for regular membership (one dollar per year) or for sustaining membership (five dollars or more annually) may be sent to the treasurer of the Association, Ira D. Landis, Route 3, Lititz, Pennsylvania. Articles and news items may be addressed to either editor at Goshen, Indiana. **Office Editor:** Paul Erb.

Vol. X

OCTOBER, 1949

No. 4

## The Ministers and Deacons at Lampeter (Mellinger) Meetinghouse

Compiled by  
AMOS K. STAUFFER

### LAMPETER MEETING-HOUSE

Closely following that first settlement of Mennonites, in the Pequea Valley, between what is now Strasburg Borough, and the Village of Willow Street, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, during late autumn of the year 1710, others of that sect arrived in this County, and by the year 1730 they had spread northward, over all of Lampeter (Lampeter) Township, Lancaster County.

We are safe to assume that these members of the "Menist Society" met regularly for religious worship—no doubt at first, in the homes of the various members, and then later in a building erected at a central location. Surely there was an organized congregation, long before the year 1767, which is the earliest date known of the existence of a meeting-house in Lampeter Township.

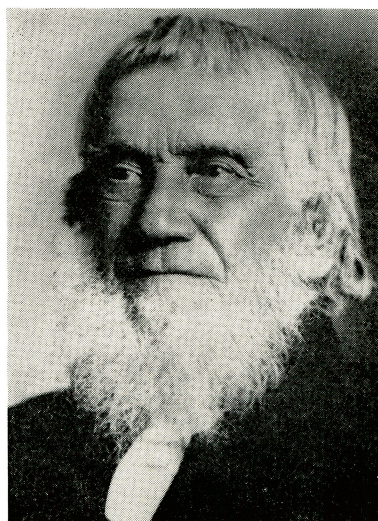
In his book, *Mennonites of the Lancaster Conference*, Martin G. Weaver states that a Martin Bare was a Preacher and Bishop, in the Lampeter district, as early as the year 1725. Martin Bare took up by Patent, a tract of 400 acres of land in that vicinity in the year 1722.

The western boundary line of the tract of 250 acres of land that Benjamin Witmer had deeded to Benjamin Londus [Landis], on December 4, 1734, extended from a point just north of the now Mennonite Church School [formerly Locust Grove], almost directly south, to a point just west of the present residence of Harry S. Lefever. It was a rectangular tract, extending for 310 perches north and south, and 109½ perches east and west.

Adjoining the southern half of the above tract on the west, was the 400 acres tract of Martin Bare, which he had been granted on March 14, 1722. Martin Bare deeded 175 acres of this tract to his son, Christian Bare, on November 20, 1757. (See Deed Book "M"—page 231, Lancaster County Court House, Lancaster, Penna.)

A small graveyard had already been started in the northeast corner of this 175 acre tract, before the year 1746. Christian Bare, in his Will, made January 9, 1770, bequeathed a parcel, or tract of land including this little graveyard, to

(Continued on page 2)



BENEDICT YODER (1817-1910)  
*Grandson of Amish Pioneer referred to below, and the last surviving member of the Amish "Glades" congregation.*

## Amish Pioneer of Somerset County

JOHN A. HOSTETLER

Perhaps nine out of every ten Amishmen in America are Pennsylvania Dutchmen. One among several outstanding Amish immigrants who came to Pennsylvania from Switzerland was Christian Yoder (1726-1816). He landed in this country in 1742. For twenty-four years he lived in Berks County, Pennsylvania.

In 1776 he moved with his family to Bedford County, now Somerset County, Pennsylvania. He purchased a large tract of timberland on the site where Pugh now stands, about seven miles east of Somerset in Stony Creek Township. The deed for this property is dated October 9, 1775.

On a small clearing this Pennsylvania Dutchman built a log house and barn. Acres and acres were cleared and cultivated until he had one of the largest and most productive farms in the county. Christian married while in Berks County, but the name of his first wife is not known. The four children born were: Fanny (1756), Barbara (1756), Christian (1758), and Jacob (1760).

His first wife died after which he married Barbara Hooley and eleven more children were born as follows: David (1763), Yost (1765), Jonathan (1766), Madlena (1769), John (1772), Elizabeth (1774), Solomon (1776), Gertrude (1778),

(Continued on page 3)

## The Amish in Gosper County Nebraska

JOHN A. HOSTETLER

Gosper County, Nebraska, was host to a colony of Old Order Amish from 1880 to 1904. The settlers came from Mifflin and Juniata counties, Pennsylvania, with the quest for securing homesteads. Diverse opinions in the Pennsylvania church induced them to start the Nebraska settlement, where they hoped to maintain their distinct nonconformed church and family life. The settlement at the most consisted of thirteen families of mostly Yoders, but the names of Speicher, Miller, and Schrock were among them also.

The county courthouse records at Elwood show that the following resided there: Samuel P. Yoder and wife, Lucinda; Yost B. Yoder and wife, Barbara (daughter of Yost H. Yoder); Yost H. Yoder and wife, Elizabeth; Joseph I. Yoder and wife, Fanny; Michael S. Yoder, Jr., and wife, Anna; Moses E. Yoder and wife, Salome; Abner Yoder (single); Solomon K. Yoder and wife, Catherine; Solomon C. Yoder and wife, Elizabeth A.; Jacob Yoder and wife, Elizabeth B.; Albert Kauffman; and John Yoder and wife, Rhoda (Kauffman). This list is not exhaustive, however.

Yost H. Yoder was the bishop of the small congregation until he died unexpectedly during the night of December 11, 1901. He had five sons and two daughters. The *Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac* (Scottdale) lists ministers from 1900 to 1904 as Yost D. Yoder and Moses D. [E.] Yoder. According to reliable sources Jacob Yoder, brother of Bishop Yost H., also served in the ministry.

The mailing address of the Amish settlement was Bertrand, Nebraska, which is located across the line in Phelps County, although the settlement was southwest of Bertrand in Gosper County. A few families lived north of the Platte River near Lexington. After several years of pioneering it became apparent that the colony would not survive. Families were closely related, and as children grew up many left for other Amish settlements. There were only three weddings among the Amish in Gosper County between the years 1880 and 1904. Minister Jacob Yoder moved to Colorado, then to Custer County, Oklahoma, where he served as the first minister of the Amish Church there. Those who returned to Mifflin County were Deacon Mose E. Yoder, Christ Speicher, Yost B. Yoder, Albert Kauffman, and one or two single persons. Minister Yost D.



Yoder and family moved to Oscoda County, Michigan, in 1903. The few remaining families believed it was wise to move to stronger Amish settlements, and in the spring of 1904 the remnant moved to North Dakota and to Pennsylvania. A small Amish cemetery is to this day in Gosper County, located in Section 10-6-21.

Yost H. Yoder of Nebraska in 1881 came to Mifflin County at the request of the "Samuel King" church to assist in a serious church dispute. He ordained David L. Hostetler and Menno L. Yoder to assist Deacon Jacob Zook, who was the only remaining church official of the one faction. Many families of the Nebraska settlement returned to Mifflin County to join the newly organized group. This Mifflin County congregation has since 1881 been known as the "Nebraska Church," and it is the "oldest order" of the Old Order Amish in America. Its membership in 1949 is 130 baptized members. Incidentally, in 1945 another rupture occurred within the Nebraska group so that there are now two kinds of Nebraska churches in Mifflin County.

Goshen, Indiana.

## MINISTERS AND DEACONS

(Continued from page 1)

the Trustees of the Lampeter Meeting House, for their use as a burial ground.

When a lane, or road, was opened along the western boundary of the Benjamin Landis property, over what was known as "Uxa Hivvel" [Ox Hill], it turned west in order to pass by the little graveyard on the Bare property, as indicated by the present turn in the road. Thus it came to pass that the Mellinger Cemetery as of today, grew toward the east, instead of the west side of road, and the land needed for its expansion came from the Landis farms.

In 1733 a road was laid out between Philadelphia and Lancaster, which is known today as the Old Philadelphia Road, and at that time the lane along the western boundary of the Landis land, above mentioned, extended southward, across the Philadelphia (Old Road) road, around the graveyard, to where it made a right-angle turn to the west to pass the buildings on the Martin Bare place, and continued westward to join the "Factory" road, via "Lampeter" road. This route can be traced today over the so called "private lanes", still in use, and was the only means of egress for these pioneers to Lancaster and Philadelphia, as the Philadelphia road known as the Philadelphia Turnpike (now the Lincoln Highway), was not laid out and constructed before the year 1793.

On the east side of the angle in the lane, where it entered the Bare property, was land owned by the Witmer family. On December 30, 1766, John Witmer, and his wife, Frena, deeded "ONE ACRE", of land to Benjamin Landas, Tobias Grider, and Jacob Hartman, all of Lampeter Township, Preachers and Ministers of the "Maneest Society" and

Congregations, to their successors, Ministers of the said Society and Congregation—the same to be chosen, agreeable to the rules of the said Society, Forever in trust, nevertheless, for the use of the Society, etc. Consideration was SIX POUNDS, in lawful money of the Province of Pennsylvania. The witnesses were: Jacob Landas (Landis) and John Whitmore (Witmer).

(See Deed Book "M"—Page 99, Lancaster County Court House.)

Evidently this ONE ACRE of land is where the first "Meeting-house" was built the following year, 1767. This first log building was replaced in 1855 with a building of native limestone, and a portion of this stone building is still standing, being used as a home for the caretaker and his family..

In 1884 a new and larger meeting-house, 45 x 75 feet in dimensions, built of brick, was erected a bit north of where the one of stone had stood. The congregation soon outgrew this new building, so that it had to be remodelled and enlarged, which was done in the year 1894, just about six years after a Sunday School class had been organized by some far sighted church leaders there.

However, this congregation continued to grow rapidly, and by 1914 it was found expedient to demolish the old brick building, in order to construct a larger house, 70 x 110 feet. This building, at that time the largest Mennonite Meeting-house in Lancaster Co., was dedicated on Tuesday, January 12, 1915. Incumbent Ministers at that time were Sanford B. Landis and David L. Landis.

Just when the name of the meeting-house was changed from the old "Lampeter" Meeting House to Mellinger, is not definitely known although we have evidence that it was known as Mellinger as early as the year 1813. (See front page of the September 1944 issue of Mennonite Historical Bulletin.) It is probable that the name was changed to distinguish it a bit from the Reformed Mennonite group, who organized a congregation in West Lampeter Township prior to or about the year 1812. Locally the two groups were commonly called—"Old" Mennonites and "New" Mennonites.

## MENNONITE MINISTERS AT MELLINGER (LAMPETER) MEETINGHOUSE

JACOB (LONDUS) LANDIS—b. about 1687, d. 1730. Claimed by some to have been the first Minister, at LAMPETER Church, may have been ordained before coming to Lancaster County, where he first located just south of what is now Lancaster City. In 1722 he purchased 200 acres of land, just northeast of the present Mellinger church property.

JACOB HOSTETTER—b. about 1693, d. 1761. Was ordained before coming to Lancaster County, in 1717, where he was a close neighbor to Jacob Londus. No doubt he was Minister at the first Mennonite Church, which was originally located along the Columbia Pike, just west

of Lancaster City, before it was removed to Rohrerstown, Pa. Hostetter lived not more than about three miles from the Lampeter church house.

MARTIN (BAER) BARE—b. about 1695, d. 2-1758. Was a Minister, and Bishop, at Lampeter Church, before the year 1725. Probably ordained as assistant to Jacob Londus or to relieve him. On November 20, 1757, he, Martin Bare, sold part of his land to his son, Christian Bare, on which a graveyard existed before 1746.

BENJAMIN LANDIS—b. about 1710, d. 1781. Was ordained prior to the year 1746, probably to relieve Martin Bare or Jacob Hostetter. Was only son of Jacob Londus.

JACOB HARTMAN—b. 1714, d. 3-18-1796. Was ordained in the year 1760, as assistant to Benjamin Landis, or as successor to Jacob Hostetter. Landis and Hartman were the two Ministers at old Lampeter, December 30, 1766 when John Witmer, and his wife, Frena, deeded ONE ACRE of land to the Congregation. Wife of Jacob Hartman was named Veronica ———, born 6-10-1718, died 12-10-1786. Buried at Mellinger.

JOHANNES STAUFFER—b. 6-15-1737, d. 12-6-1811. Was ordained in the year 1791, probably as assistant to Hartman, who was getting up in years. Johannes married to Veronica Buckwalter—b. 6-19-1746, d. 2-16-1826. Both buried at Mellinger.

HEINRICH BUCKWALTER—b. 8-23-1742, d. 11-14-1805. Was ordained in the year 1796, as successor to Jacob Hartman. Wife, Elizabeth ———, b. 9-2-1735, d. 10-28-1816. Both buried at Mellinger.

JOHANNES KREIDER—b. 4-13-1784, d. 8-10-1847. Was ordained in the year 1812, to succeed Johannes Stauffer, his late near neighbor. Johannes (John) Kreider married to Esther Denlinger—b. 9-15-1788, d. 9-5-1863. Both buried at Mellinger.

JOHN BUCKWALTER—b. 5-19-1765, d. 12-25-1841. Evidently ordained about 1806, to succeed the late Henry Buckwalter. Poor health obliged him to discontinue preaching about eight years before his death. His wife was Elizabeth ———, b. 12-20-1753, d. 7-25-1824. Both buried at Mellinger.

DAVID WITMER—b. 8-9-1800, d. 1-10-1876. Was ordained in the year 1833, to relieve the ailing John Buckwalter. David's wife was Anna Rutt—born 12-22-1798, and died 3-9-1868. Both buried in Mellinger Cemetery.

TOBIAS KREIDER—b. 9-10-1811, d. 10-19-1864. Ordained 9-10-1847, to succeed his late father, Johannes Kreider. He was first married to Elizabeth Landis—7-9-1810, died 7-5-1848; and second to Barbara F. Herr, who was born 9-3-1812, d. 3-10-1905. Both are buried in cemetery at Mellinger Church.

ADAM RANCK—b. 6-9-1808, d. 3-23-1882. Was ordained in the year 1862, probably assisting Tobias Kreider. Married Barbara Resh, b. 6-29-1812, d. 4-26-1893.



Both buried in Cemetery at the Stumptown Church.

JOHN LANDIS LANDIS—b. 7-28-1832, d. 7-20-1914. Ordained 12-27-1865 at the Stumptown Church, to succeed Tobias Kreider. He married Mary Johns Denlinger, who was b. 11-24-1835, d. 10-1-1916. Buried at Mellinger.

DAVID BUCKWALTER—b. 5-28-1820, d. 3-28-1906. Ordained 8-8-1876, relieving Adam Ranck. David's wife was Mary Kreider—b. 9-6-1822, d. 9-18-1900. Both buried in the Mellinger Cemetery.

SANFORD BENDER LANDIS—b. 8-1-1867, d. 6-14-1926. Ordained 11-24-1896 to relieve the aged David Buckwalter. Sanford was instantly killed by a stroke of lightning. He was married to Elnora L. Landis—b. 10-2-1871. Sanford is buried in Stumptown Mennonite Cemetery.

DAVID LEAMAN LANDIS—b. 2-7-1882. Ordained 11-7-1911, relieving John L. Landis. His first wife was Annetta H. Esbenschade—b. 1-2-1883, d. 1926. Second wife, the widow, Elizabeth Eshleman-Martin—b. 3-19-1884.

ELMER GOOD MARTIN—b. 9-29-1894. Ordained 9-8-1926, to succeed the late Sanford B. Landis. First wife, Mabel Z. Diffenbach—b. 7-8-1894, passed away 4-14-1923. Second wife, Ada Musser Kreider, b. 5-1-1889. Elmer G. Martin was ordained—8-8-1946—as Bishop for the Mellinger and Stumptown Churches, and their Missions.

HARRY STAUFFER LEFEVER—b. 4-6-1897. Ordained 7-28-1943, to succeed Elmer G. Martin, after Mellinger-Stumptown group had adopted policy of conducting weekly services, and each group was to have their own two Ministers. Harry S. Lefever married Mary Metzler Groff—b. 8-26-1898.

#### DEACONS AT THE MELLINGER (LAMPETER) MENNONITE MEETING HOUSE

TOBIAS (CRIDER) GREIDER—b. about 1723, d. 3-1791. He was one of the early Deacons at the Lampeter Church, for there is evidence that he was the Deacon, in the year 1766, when John Witmer deeded the "ONE ACRE" of land to "Benjamin Landas, Jacob Hartman, and Tobias Crider, all of Lampeter Township, Preachers and Ministers of the Maneest Society, and Congregations, etc."

The fact that a Congregation existed in the locality before the purchase of that ONE ACRE for the building site of their Church is thus definitely established.

Tobias Greider married Ann Buckwalter, a sister to Veronica Buckwalter, the wife of Johannes Stauffer, as Tobias identifies the Johannes Stauffer as his brother-in-law, when he made a Will on 8-29-1789. (See Will Book "X"—Vol. 2, page 234, in Lancaster County Court House.)

MARTIN MELLINGER—b. 12-28-1752, d. 10-28-1842. Was ordained about the year 1790, and served for fifty-two years.

He first married Maria Bare—b. 4-19-1761, d. 11-14-1826. She was a daughter of Christian Bare, owner of the land on which the little graveyard grew up which later developed into the present extensive, and beautiful Mellinger Cemetery. Mart Mellinger was an active worker in the Church, during all of his fifty-two years of service, and deserved this honor of having the Church house named after him. Martin Mellinger married a second time, to widow Elizabeth Denlinger, and, having no children from either marriage, he willed the farm, which he had gotten from his father-in-law, Christian Bare, to his step-son, by name Abraham Denlinger. He is buried in the Mellinger Mennonite Cemetery.

MICHAEL BUCKWALTER—b. 10-4-1809, d. 9-15-1876. He was probably the successor to Deacon Martin Mellinger. He married Susanna S. Landis—b. 2-19-1806, d. 1-6-1886. He and wife are both buried in Mellinger Cemetery.

HENRY DENLINGER HELLER—b. 4-12-1847, d. 8-13-1924. He was ordained on the 19th day of October, 1876, succeeding Michael Buckwalter. He married Elizabeth D. Leaman, born 12-1-1848, died 3-20-1920. Both are buried in the Mellinger Cemetery.

AARON LEAMAN GROFF—b. 4-7-1873, d. 9-26-1947. He was ordained the 29th day of November, 1921, as assistant to Deacon Henry D. Heller. Aaron married Elizabeth Leaman Groff—b. 10-5-1874. He is buried in the Stumptown Mennonite Cemetery.

JOHN HAROLD BUCKWALTER—b. 5-25-1897. He was ordained the 14th day of January, 1942, as the Deacon for the Mellinger group, at the time they decided to relieve Deacon Groff from the heavy duty of serving both Mellinger and Stumptown districts. His first wife was Gertrude R. Groff—b. 10-8-1899, d. 10-19-1929. Second wife is Mary Stauffer Lefever, b. 1-21-1900. She is a sister to Harry Lefever.

851 E. Orange Street  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

#### AMISH PIONEER

(Continued from page 1)

Jephtha and Esther, twins (1780), and Henry (1782).

Christian Yoder died November 20, 1816, at the ripe old age of ninety. His second wife died March 6, 1812. Most of the children grew up in the immediate community and founded an Amish settlement known as the "Yoder settlement."

Benedict Yoder (1817-1910), son of John Yoder, and grandson of Christian, married Sarah Miller on April 24, 1842, and raised a family of twelve children. He lived to be ninety-three years old and was the last surviving member of the Amish church at the "Glades" congregation. Information for this article was supplied by Ernest Yoder of Salisbury, Pa.

Goshen, Indiana.

## The Twenty-Three Mile Furrow

MELVIN GINGERICH

In 1946 Random House published *The Sante Fe Trail, A Chapter in the Opening of the West*. In it was the following statement:

"Amish settlers had come from Pennsylvania about 1871 and developed two communities in Marion County, Kansas. The settlements were about 23 miles apart, and in order to maintain communications between them the Amish ploughed a furrow all the way from one to the other to serve as a guide over the open prairie."

These statements interested the writer and for nearly a year he has been trying to find answers to several questions raised by the quotation. Obviously it was not the Amish who plowed the furrow, for their settlements in Kansas were not that early. Who did plow the furrow? What settlements did it connect? When were these settlements made? What was the direction of the furrow? Was it really twenty-three miles long? In what year was the furrow plowed? What method of plowing was used?

It was soon learned that others had written on this subject. A manuscript on the history of the Pennsylvania Mennonite congregation, near Zimmerdale, Kansas, declared,

"R. J. Heatwole plowed with oxen, through the tall blue-stem grass, a twenty-three mile furrow from the present site of Marion, Kansas, to a mile north of the Spring Valley church. This road, covered with sunflowers . . . , guided not only the Mennonites to their places of worship but all early settlers used it and numerous caravans traveled to and from western harvest fields over it."

Perhaps the Kansas State Historical Society could shed light on our problem. A letter from their secretary, Kirke Meehem, reported a feature story in the *Kansas City Times*, November 24, 1939, by Cecil Howes. In the story, Mr. Howes reported,

"Since the lands were not all contiguous, the Mennonites, according to Albrecht, plowed a furrow twenty-three miles long from Peabody to the main settlements so that they would have a track to follow across the prairie in hauling supplies to their homes."

Here Mr. Howes is referring to a master's thesis by Abraham Albrecht of Newton, Kansas. In the thesis, Mr. Albrecht talks about Amish Mennonites arriving in Reno County in the eighteen seventies. His authority was D. H. Bender, at that time President of Hesston College. Albrecht wrote,

"They did not migrate to Kansas in large numbers, the majority preferring to remain in their old home. Since the country was still barren and the settlers were poor they had to endure the hardships of pioneer life. There were no established roads as yet and in order to find their way



from one settlement to the other they made a furrow with a plow to indicate the direction.

Apparently Mr. Howes had additional sources of information, for Albrecht's paragraph could scarcely be enlarged to the above *Times* statement.

If R. J. Heatwole plowed the furrow, perhaps articles written by him would refer to this event. A letter from him, written June 20, 1893, and printed in the *Herald of Truth*, July 15, 1893, declared,

"After Bro. Yother returned home Bishop Daniel Brundage came from Missouri and took a homestead ten miles north of father Kilmer and moved upon it with his family in May 1873.

"There being but few inhabitants in the county he found it necessary—since there were no roads—to draw a furrow fourteen miles long due east to our settlement in Marion County, so we might find our course along this furrow back and forth to worship together without losing the way along which there was nothing to break the monotony of the journey save the flocks of prairie chickens, and the small herds of antelopes cantering from us in the distance."

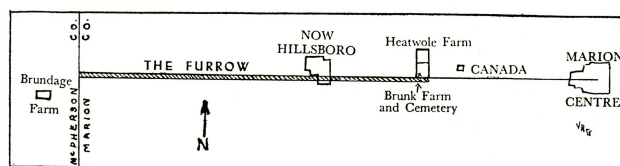
This, it would seem, should be reliable source material. There must have been a fourteen-mile furrow running straight east to the Marion County settlement and Bishop Daniel Brundage must have helped plow it. Could it be that these men plowed a number of furrows at different times in these pioneer days? Or could it be that Brundage and Heatwole together plowed the furrow, with Heatwole giving Brundage the credit?

The *Reader's Digest*, February, 1941, in "Chronicles of Americanization (IV)" tells the story of the Russian Mennonites settling in Kansas. It states, "Their only guide was a single furrow 22 miles long which the father had plowed." The "father" in the quotation is Herman W. Suderman. The furrow begins at Newton and it is 22 miles long. Again the records are conflicting and confusing.

Still another early settler has been given credit for this feat of plowmanship. C. W. Coopriders of Windom, Kansas, believed that Chris Kilmer, of Oregon, was the man that deserved the honor. Although Mr. Kilmer was ninety-three years old and nearly deaf at the time of the interview, his memory of boyhood events was clear and he was able to give exact answers to the questions asked him in an interview by his son-in-law, John H. Hamilton, of Sheridan, Oregon.

Mr. Kilmer, however, insisted that he did not plow the furrow. It was R. J. Heatwole, assisted by several others, who should have the praise. He was working

for Mr. Heatwole at that time and although he did not help, he remembers the event clearly. It took place, very likely, in 1873 or 1874. The furrow started approximately six miles west of Marion Center and went due west to a point one mile north and one mile east of the present Spring Valley Mennonite Church, south of Canton. It was later extended



Sketch showing location of the "Furrow."

farther west. Thus it connected the area in which Bishop Brundage lived with the small community in which R. J. Heatwole lived.

The furrow was very straight, as it followed the section line, running east and west along the south edge of the present town of Hillsboro on what is now Highway 50N. This was made possible by the use of a compass. A number of men went

Henry G. Brunk, his wife and six children arrived at Marion Centre, Kansas, October 13, 1873. He was sick when he arrived and eight days later died of typhoid fever. During the next several months three of the children died of the same ailment. They and their father are buried side by side in the "Brunk Cemetery" near the east end of the "Furrow." Cuts courtesy *Mennonite Life*.



ahead with a compass and located the cornerstones along the section line. They then drove stakes which the plowman could use as guides. Mr. Kilmer thinks the plow was pulled by horses.

From all this contradictory material, certain points seem fairly well established as facts. Although we do not know how many furrows of this kind were plowed in Marion and McPherson counties, it does seem clear that R. J. Heatwole helped plow a furrow extending from his community straight west into McPherson County to a point near the area in which Bishop Brundage lived. This event took

place soon after Heatwole, Brundage, and their friends settled in this section of Kansas.

Reuben J. Heatwole, born in Rockingham County, Virginia, in 1847, arrived in Marion Center, Kansas, in June, 1872, expecting to find other Mennonites there, but he was disappointed. In four weeks, however, the Noah Good family arrived from Clarinda, Iowa, and settled three miles southwest of Marion Center. Soon after that, Benjamin Bare from Indiana settled in the community and married a daughter of Noah Good. Heatwole's homestead was about six miles straight west of Marion Center.

At about the same time, in 1873, the Henry Hornberger family settled three miles north and one mile west of Peabody. In 1886 the Catlin Mennonite Church was erected on Hornberger's farm. The congregation in this area was never very large. In 1893 there were forty members; in 1947 there were fifteen.

During the seventies, the (Old) Mennonites held monthly Sunday services in four localities in Marion and McPherson counties. One of the places was the Weaver schoolhouse, a mile north of the Hornberger farm. Once a month services were held in the Good schoolhouse, near the Good homestead southwest of Marion Center. A third monthly service was held west of Marion Center, in the vicinity of Canada, where the Brunks, Coopriders, and Heatwoles lived. The fourth place was west of Canada, near Canton, in the area to which Brundage had moved in 1873. This area became the center of a thriving Mennonite congregation, the Spring Valley Mennonite Church. Their meeting-house was built on the Brundage homestead. In 1947 the church had 78 members.

These scattered Mennonite families living in four separate areas during the seventies but near enough to each other for occasional visits and group worship must have felt the need for social and spiritual fellowship.

It was with this need in mind that Heatwole and Brundage plowed the path "so we might find our course along this furrow back and forth to worship together without losing the way."—From the July, 1949, *Mennonite Life*.

Menno Harder, faculty member of Bethel College, was granted his doctor's degree in June by the University of Southern California. His 600-page thesis on "the Origin, Philosophy and Development of Education Among the Mennonites" covers the entire field of Mennonite history. A 2500 word summary of his study will be published this year.